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Men of the Kingdom

John Huss: The Witness

By

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To the Memory of

My Father,

William J. Kuhns,

Born in Lancaster, Pa., January 23, 1823.
Died in Brooklyn, N. Y.,
June 27, 1885.

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PREFACE



In writing this book my aim has been to give a plain, straightforward, and concise account of the life, death, and influence of one of the world's most inspiring witnesses of the truth. In so doing I have used the standard authorities—those which form the basis of every modern discussion of the life of John Huss. For the opportunity to use the most indispensable of all these authorities — Von der Hardt's Rerum Concilii Constantiensis, tomus IV, Palacky's Geschichte von Böhmen, and the same author's Documenta Mag. Johannis Hus Vitam, doctrinam . . . illustrantia—I am indebted to the courtesy of the Librarian of Harvard University. In quoting from the proceedings of the Council of Constance—although I have had Von der Hardt constantly on hand for reference—I have used Lenfant's History of the Council of Constance, which is largely a translation of the former.

CONTENTS



CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE, - - - - - - - -	5
I.	FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION, -	9
II.	POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN BOHEMIA, - - -	24
III.	EARLY LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF HUSS, - -	39
IV.	HUSS AND THE ROMAN HIERARCHY, -	63
V.	HUSS IN EXILE, - - - - - -	79
VI.	HUSS GOES TO CONSTANCE, - - -	90
VII.	IMPRISONMENT, TRIAL AND DEATH OF HUSS, - - - - - - -	105
VIII.	THE WARS OF THE HUSSITES, - -	137
IX.	CONCLUSION, - - - - - -	165

John Huss: The Witness



CHAPTER I.

FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION.

THE materials for a life of John Huss are comparatively meager. Practically nothing is known of his early years, and the biographer is confined to the narration of the oft-repeated story of his quarrel with the Roman hierarchy and his trial, condemnation, and execution at Constance, together with a more or less complete analysis of his reformatory teachings.

Yet Huss occupies a peculiar position in the history of the development of evangelical religion. In many respects he may be said to have begun the Reformation; and if circumstances had been favorable, Hussitism and not Lutheranism might have been the great antagonist of Roman Catholicism throughout the succeeding centuries.

This was not to be. A combination of circumstances—historical, social, and religious—prevented Huss, as they had prevented Wyclif a few years

before, from becoming the leader of modern Protestantism. The world had still to wait a hundred years before the final break of the great schism was to occur. Yet if Huss was not the first of the new dispensation, the founder of a new religion, he was the most influential, as he was the last of the forerunners of the Reformation. He was literally the morning-star which led the way to the full daylight of evangelical doctrine, which, through the influence of Luther, has spread over the whole world.

It is a natural tendency to look upon all great movements, as suddenly bursting forth, without any previous announcement. It was long thought that the Declaration of Independence was the work of a few men of genius, such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and others, instead of being what modern historical investigation has shown it to be, the fruit of ages of slow development, reaching maturity under the favorable conditions of a new climate and a virgin soil. American freedom is not the invention of one man or of many men, but the end-result of a process "slowly broadening down, from precedent to precedent."

The same thing is true of the Reformation. It is not entirely the work of Luther or Zwingli or Calvin; the times and even the seasons were ripe—Paul had planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase.

The root-idea of Protestantism is a protest

against the great hierarchy of Rome, against the substitution of rites and ceremonies for heart-religion; against the abuse of priestly power, especially in the selling of spiritual benefits for money. In Luther these things were summed up, first, in the great doctrine that "the just shall live by faith," which he opposed to the great mass of works of supererogation; and secondly, in the doctrine of the authority of the Bible, which he opposed to the claim of papal infallibility. But, after all, there was little that was new in these doctrines of Luther. They had severally and collectively been promulgated time and time again by holy men throughout the Dark and Middle Ages, until we reach John Huss, by whom the authority of the Bible, if not justification by faith, was once for all laid down as an incontrovertible fact. It is, therefore, not without value,—nay, it is the only reasonable way to make Huss's work stand out in bold relief,—to trace the development of Protestant doctrines up to his time.

"The Christian religion," says Professor Harnack, "is something simple and sublime; it means one thing and one only—eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God." And this religion is contained entire in the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning—first, the "Kingdom of God and its coming; secondly, God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul; thirdly, the higher righteousness and the command-

ment of love." "His message," continues Professor Harnack, "is great and powerful, because so simple and yet so rich; so simple as to be exhausted in each of the leading thoughts he uttered; so rich that every one of these thoughts seems inexhaustible and the full meaning of the sayings and parables beyond our reach. He himself stands behind everything he said. His words speak to us across the centuries with the freshness of the present. The kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his soul and laying hold of it. It is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals. It is God Himself, in His power. This is seen in all Jesus' parables. It is not a question of angels or devils, thrones and principalities, but of God and the soul, the soul and its God."

Such is the essence of the Christian religion, as described by one of the foremost theologians of the day. It needs no words of mine to point out the vast difference between this view of the Church of Christ and that held for so many centuries and even to-day by the Roman Church.

The teaching of Jesus, simple as it is and perfect in its purity, was yet promulgated in a world incapable of taking it at once and assimilating it to itself. Like all things else it had to grow and develop; it had to overcome obstacles, many and powerful, before it could become universally accepted and be put into practice. In the course of the struggle it became changed itself, and for a

time seemed almost to have lost its primitive purity. There is no more striking phenomenon in the history of civilization than the gradual transformation of the simple gospel of Christ into the world-overshadowing hierachical system of the Church of Rome during the Middle Ages. Christ taught that God was a spirit, yet by a certain kind of return to paganism we see this divine spirit localized and materialized in the images of the saints and in the deification of the priest, and especially of the pope. Again, we see the freedom of the spirit, the grace and love and mercy of God the Father, give way to Pelagianism, "the theory of salvation by works, adhesion to doctrinal formula, sacramental usage, priestly absolution, outward mortification, and monkish asceticism."

In consequence of these influences, very early a great change came over the Church. An ecclesiastical community was formed, clergy and laymen were separated, the doctrine was firmly established that only through priestly mediation could men approach God. Faith was changed to creed, and love for Christ was replaced by loyalty to the Church. It was claimed and universally admitted that God had deputed His powers and prerogatives to the pope and the hierarchy, and little by little the gospel became no longer one of hope and love, but of fear. It is no use to utter diatribes against this state of things. It was the necessary historical result of the confusion produced by the coming

together of elements so powerful and so diverse as paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, to which we may add the element of barbarism injected into the seething mass by the Teutonic nations during the period of the Völkerwanderung.

It was only by compromise that Christianity could maintain the unequal fight; only by substituting saint-worship for idolatry, and retaining the spectacular charm of incense and candles; only by adapting to itself the tremendous prestige of the Roman Empire, that it was able to become the carrying agent of the teachings of Christ down the centuries.

But while this was so, there have been all along men and sects who have regarded the materialization of the Roman Church with distrust and disfavor; who have looked back with longing toward the primitive simplicity of the apostolic times, and sought to bring the Church of Rome away from its idolatry back to the simple doctrines of Christ. The essence of Protestantism is the clearing away from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus of the barnacles of superstition, formalism, and lust of power. And this effort had been going on for centuries before the Reformation, in the bosom of the Church itself, generally, although not always, under the stigma of heresy. All along there had been men whose lives were filled with spiritual power, such as St. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and especially St. Augustine. No more beautiful scene ex-

ists in religious literature than that described by St. Augustine in his Confessions, when he and his mother, a few days before her death, leaning on the window of their lodgings at Ostia, discoursed together with a marvelous sweetness of spiritual things, their hearts strangely warmed within them as they talked of God and the soul.

Undoubtedly, then, all through the Dark and Middle Ages there were individuals still filled with the simple religion of the apostolic days.

It is not, however, till we reach the twelfth century that we find regular organized and widely spread sects within the bosom of the Church, who were looked upon by the hierarchy as dangerous. The most notorious of these were the Cathari, who, in addition to the old Manichæan doctrine of the good and the evil principle in the universe, a doctrine which often led them to the most fanatical vagaries, demanded that the Church should return to the simplicity of the apostolic times, opposed the supreme authority of the pope, declared infant baptism to be absurd, would fain abolish rich churches, mass, and the priesthood, lived lives of asceticism, refused to take oaths, and repudiated auricular confession. They lasted from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, and were largely represented in Southern France, Northern Italy, and Germany (not in England), reaching their high-water mark about the year 1200. From the town of Albi, in Southern France, where they were especially nu-

merous, they received the name of Albigensians. No more terrible example of the *odium theologicum* can be found in history than the Albigensian crusade, which was started by St. Dominic and carried out to its bitter end by Simon de Montfort. At Carcassonne four hundred were burnt alive, and at the siege of Béziers the papal legate Arnold, when asked how they should recognize the faithful from the heretics, cried, "Kill, kill, the Lord will know His own."

Still more famous and far more influential on later reformers were the Waldensians. Some say that they were the same as the Cathari. However this may be, the movement seems to have been started in 1160 by Peter Waldo of Lyons (hence his followers were also called Poor Men of Lyons). They differ from the Cathari in rejecting the Manichæan doctrine of good and evil spirits. Their beliefs and customs were not unlike those of the modern Quakers. They refused to take oaths, repudiated capital punishment, claimed the right of the laity to consecrate the host, thus rendering unnecessary a regularly ordained priesthood, and boldly proclaimed their belief that the Roman Church was not the Church of Christ. They agreed with the Cathari in using the New Testament alone as the basis of their conduct, condemned the possession of all property, denied the temporal power of the pope, and declared that the existing Church was not necessary to the worship of God.

It has been claimed that the Waldensians originated in apostolic times. This is not true, yet the slow preparation for their doctrines was the work of ages, and many of the prominent tenets can be found in the preceding centuries.

The Waldensians were subjected to fierce persecutions, were driven out of France, fled to the mountains of Northern Italy, where their descendants still exist, and even went so far as Germany and Bohemia. In this latter country they undoubtedly exerted some influence in preparing the way for the great Hussite movement in the fifteenth century. After the Reformation they became part of the Reformed branch of Protestantism. To-day they are making a determined effort to evangelize Italy.

Among the most revolutionary of mediæval heretics was Arnold of Brescia (died in 1155), who boldly opposed the claims to universal overlordship on the part of the pope, and declared that in order that the world should live in peace the Church must return to the purity and simplicity of apostolic times. Still further went Almaric of Bena (died in 1209), who declared that as the law of the Old Testament had been abolished by Christ, so at the coming of the Holy Spirit the reign of the Son would cease. He repudiated the baptism of children, the worship of saints, use of images and relics, and the confession. He declared that the only thing necessary was to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

All the above-mentioned reformers were stigmatized as heretics. Their doctrines were anathematized by the Church, they themselves were excommunicated and persecuted with all the cruelty that the human mind could invent. Yet within the bosom of the Church itself arose from time to time men who had in many respects the same doctrines, and yet who remained loyal and obedient to the established order of the Church. One of the strangest of these men was Joachim da Fiore,—

"Di spirito profetico dotato,"

according to whom there were three periods to the history of the world—the first period, that of the Father, was represented by the Old Testament; the second, that of the Son, was represented by the New Testament; the third, that of the Holy Ghost, was to begin in 1260, when mankind should become purified, all selfishness should disappear, and men should no longer struggle for the possession of worldly goods.

The influence of Joachim in the following centuries was enormous, and was largely responsible for the many prophecies and visions that mark the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. His true followers, however, were among the branch of the Franciscan order known as the Spirituals.

In view of the widespread interest in St. Francis in recent times, and the number of popular discussions of his life, it seems hardly necessary to

say much of him here. And yet in many points of his own life, and especially in the development of certain branches of the order founded by him, St. Francis had no small influence in preparing the way for a religion of the heart as opposed to one of mere form. After his death his order was split up into factions—the Conventuals, composed of those who demanded a liberal interpretation of his rule; the Fraticelli, who demanded a rigid interpretation of the same; and finally the Spirituals, the most radical of all, who adopted the prophecies of Joachim da Fiore, expected the final triumph of poverty and the total renovation of the world under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

While in general the various monastic orders became more and more corrupt, yet there were formed in the fourteenth century, especially in Germany, many groups of persons in the Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian orders, whose conduct and aspirations were not unlike those of the Pietists in the seventeenth century. Through them a deep revival of spiritual religion swept through Germany, whose influence was closely connected with the beginnings of Luther's Reformation.

Chief among them was Eckhart, who flourished about the year 1325. He had close relations with the Beghards and the Brothers of the Free Spirit. He was a man of great speculative talent, and laid down the lines of German mysticism which were

followed by all succeeding mystics. He preached in German on the actual work of the spirit in the heart. Yet he was not like so many mystics who sought only their own pleasure in the ecstasy of contemplation and the *unio mystica*. With the practical good sense of the German character, which is so often combined with deep religious feeling, Eckhart saw the danger of allowing contemplation to degenerate into selfishness. It should be not an end in itself, but a source of comfort and strength to meet the battles of life. His doctrine is summed up in the beautiful words, "What a man has taken in by contemplation, he pours out in love."

Among Eckhart's immediate followers were Ruysbroeck—the Doctor Ecstaticus—and Henry of Suso. The latter is one of the most interesting figures in Pre-reformation Church history. He was born in 1295 at Uberlingen on Lake Constance, not far from Constance, where a little over one hundred years later John Huss suffered martyrdom.

With John Tauler we enter into close touch with the Protestant Reformation. His influence on Luther is well known. He was born in Strasbourg about 1300, was a Dominican friar, and was in constant communication with the Friends of God in Bâle. He was especially famous as a preacher, and everywhere was listened to by multitudes. His sermons were full of deep spiritual power, and

came from a heart full of love for God and man. The real kernel of his teaching is the indwelling of God in the soul, and his wonderful success was due to his own deep religious experience. As he himself said, "No man can teach what he has not lived through himself." His influence is well-known on Luther, who in his early days of discontent with his religious experience was advised by the Director-General Staupitz to read Tauler's sermons, and found much comfort therein.

The greatest influence exerted on Luther, however, was by a little book which fell into his hands, and which he wrongly thought to be the work of Tauler, and of which he published an edition under the title of Theologia Deutsch. It was a treatise on heart-religion, and its object was to give a practical turn to the teachings of Eckhart. It shows how sin in its essence is selfishness, and how the only way to get near to God is to rise above the I and the Me. All these German mystics of the fourteenth century, however, remained in the bosom of the Church, and confined themselves to the exemplification and promulgation of a pure emotional religion, combined with an ascetic manner of living. They carefully refrained from criticising the Church itself, either in its doctrines or its outer form and observances.

Although all the above-mentioned forerunners of the Reformation had so many ideas in common with those of Huss and Luther, yet the connection

is only occasional, by no means organic. With Wyclif, however, we begin the definite chain of events which, passing through Huss, found a culmination in Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. John Wyclif was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1320; was educated at Oxford, and became one of the ablest philosophers of his day. Although the universal sway of Scholasticism had passed away, yet the old bitter hostility between the Nominalists and Realists still continued. In spite of the fact that the theory of Nominalism was more akin to the spirit of the Reformation, Wyclif himself was a Realist. It was through his philosophy that he first became known in Bohemia, and strange as it may seem to us to-day, the fact that Huss was a follower of the Realistic philosophy of Wyclif had a powerful influence in bringing about his destruction.

The condition of the Church filled Wyclif with disgust and indignation. The year 1378 was the turning point in his career, owing to the schism brought about by the election, in September of that year, of Clement VII in opposition to Urban VI. He attacked the whole principle of the papacy, as the root of all evils which then burdened Christendom. He translated the Bible into English prose, sent forth a number of poor priests to teach the gospel to the people, all of which produced a profound commotion throughout England. On the one hand the common people heard them gladly,

on the other the rich and influential clergy were filled with rage and hate.

Among the epoch-making teachings of Wyclif which later were taken up more or less completely by the various sects of Protestantism were the following: Sin deprives a man from possessing anything; all property should be held in common; spiritual power should be entirely separate from the civil; the Church should hold no property; excommunication was of no effect, except the subject of it were in sin, and in no case should it be promulgated for any offense connected with temporal affairs. He denied transubstantiation, holding the same doctrine as Luther did later—consubstantiation. As we shall see later, some of these doctrines Huss accepted, others not. Wyclif escaped martyrdom in his lifetime. His doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper was published in 1381; it was condemned by the University of Oxford, and a Council was called to try him. Though he was cited to appear at Rome, he never went. He was struck with paralysis December 28, 1384, and died on New-Year's eve. In 1415 his works were condemned by the Council of Constance, and in 1428 his body was dug up and burned. His influence did not last long in England, but through Huss his doctrines became known to Luther, and played an important part in the great movement of the Reformation on the Continent.

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS OF BOHEMIA.

The Reformation inaugurated by John Huss and the events which followed thereupon can not be clearly understood without some general idea of the state of politics, society, and religion in Bohemia towards the end of the fourteenth century; nor can these conditions themselves be understood without some idea of their gradual development. Only by reference to the national history can we get a clear conception of the complex problems involved in the whole movement of Hussitism. We must know once for all that this movement was not the work of one man, however powerful his influence was, but it was intimately connected with national and religious traditions. The patriotism of a race threatened with being swamped by foreign immigration, joined to the tenacity with which all men cling to the customs of their fathers, made Bohemia a fertile soil for the doctrines of the Waldensians and Wyclif to take root and grow up. Contemporary events, imperial and papal schisms, the general corruption of the Church, all reached a climax just at the time when a man was sent of

God to teach the truth and become the leader of countless thousands.

The Bohemians are of Slavic origin. The land itself was first inhabited by a Celtic race, the Boii, then by a German race, the Marcomanni, who, driven out by the Huns, settled in the land now known as Bavaria. The Slavs, who were allies of the Huns, settled in the land left vacant by the Marcomanni.

For long centuries the country was ruled by native kings, but in 1310 the male line died out, and as the sister of Wenzel, the last of the Slavs, had married John, a son of Henry VII of Luxembourg, a German dynasty was seated on the throne of Bohemia. Thus the land became intimately connected with the various fortunes of Germany, and when Charles IV, who had become king in 1346, was elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Bohemia was drawn likewise into the complex relations of imperial politics.

The history of Bohemia during all this time had been one of almost unceasing progress in prosperity. The native kings, such as Ottocar I (1198-1230) and Otto III (1253-1278), had raised the country to a position of influence throughout the whole of Western Europe. But it was especially through Charles IV that Bohemia reached its climax of prosperity. According to Palacky he was "the most popular king who ever ruled in Bohemia. To this day every Bohemian heart warms at the

mention of his name, and all lips overflow with reverence and gratitude toward the memory of a ruler who, in the tradition of the people, has become the representative of the highest glory and prosperity of his fatherland." The emperor seemed to have a special love for the land of his mother, and he devoted his best interests toward building it up. He made it strong financially, improved agriculture, commerce, and industry, favored the arts and sciences, regulated justice, morals, and religion. It was he that made Prague the beautiful city it is to-day. He laid the foundations of the famous Karlsbrücke, and built many churches and castles. Æneas Sylvius, who afterward became Pope Pius II, declared that he had seen no land which could compare with Bohemia in the number and magnificence of its buildings.

The most important event of Charles's activity in this respect, and one of the deepest importance for the work of Huss, was the founding of the University of Prague, April 7, 1348. This was the first of the German universities, and became almost immediately the Mecca of students from all parts of Northern Europe. They came even from France and England. In 1408 the number of students is said to have amounted to thirty thousand. It was organized after the model of the University of Paris, consisted of four faculties,—Theology, Law, Medicine, and Philosophy; and was divided into four "nations"—the Bohemian (including Moravia

and Hungary), Bavarian (including Austria, Swabia, Franconia, and the Rhineland), Polish (including Silesia, Lithuania, and Russia), and Saxon (including Thuringia, Upper and Lower Saxony, Denmark and Sweden). It will be noticed in the above arrangement that the Bohemians were far outnumbered by foreigners of various sorts, and especially by the Germans. This was to have an important effect on the reformatory movement started by Huss a few years later.

In order to understand the violent passions aroused by this movement, we must now cast a glance at the religions and racial conditions of Bohemia. Ottacar II had brought large numbers of German colonists to Bohemia, and thus laid the foundation of the inevitable struggle between Slavs and Teutons which became later so fierce and bitter. These Germans were largely increased in numbers after the accession of Charles IV to the throne, and especially after the founding of the University of Prague. Of the vast number of students who flocked to Prague the majority were Germans, and they naturally made use of their numerical superiority to monopolize the power in all university matters.

Not only in scholastic affairs, however, did the Germans dispute the lead with the Bohemians, but in commerce, business, and even municipal government. Prague was crowded with German merchants and bankers, who threatened to swamp the

less strenuous Slavic element. Hence arose bitter strife, engendered by jealousy, patriotism, and race hatred.

Closely connected with these racial differences were the problems raised by religious and ecclesiastical conditions. The Bohemians had been converted to Christianity much later than the other nations of Europe, and when they were thus converted it was not by such wholesale and violent means as we observe in the case of the Franks and Saxons. The chief influence had come from Constantinople, and of especial importance were the labors of the two brothers, Cyril and Method, from Thessalonica, the great apostles of the Slavic countries. To them must be ascribed the glory of converting the Bohemians and Moravians.

This Slavic origin of the Bohemian Church gave a decided turn to its customs, traditions, and doctrines, and thus formed an important, though vague, element of the Hussite movement. In the first place, no foreign tongue had been imposed upon them in the church services, as the Latin had been in the Roman Church. A much greater freedom and independence was allowed, as for instance the fact that the priests were at liberty to marry. In outward forms little effort was made to burden the people with useless ceremonies and extortionate tithes. Such was the condition of things in the early times. But this condition was to undergo a slow but steady change as soon as the Bohemian Church

was united to that of Rome. When in the tenth century the Magyars attacked Bohemia, both it and Moravia were forced to seek protection of the German emperor, and thus a close degree of relations was established between the two countries, one result of which was the merging of the Bohemian Church into that of Rome. The numerous German colonists who, from the eleventh century on, flowed into Bohemia, and brought with them their customs, laws, and government, naturally brought it about that the German form of service—*i. e.*, that of the Roman Church—gradually superseded that of the Slavs.

Yet the people themselves only slowly yielded to this gradual displacement, especially as it meant the giving up of their freedom and independence, the substitution of Latin for their native tongue in service and sermons, the taking away of the individual cup from the people in the Eucharist, and the burden of insatiable calls for tribute on the part of Rome. As many of the higher clergy were Germans, we can easily see how these two elements, religious and national, tended to keep the common people in a state of protest against the Church, a state which later was changed to fanaticism by the course of events.

It has been a much discussed question as to where John Huss got his reformatory ideas. Some have declared that the Waldensians, who had been driven out of France and who were scattered over

all Northern Europe, Bohemia among the rest, sowed the seed of the evangelical movement, which Huss made his own. Recent writers have shown that there is but little basis of truth in this theory, although doubtless Waldensian doctrines did affect Hussitism, especially the different sects into which it was split up after the death of Huss. A much stronger case has been made out by those who claim that Huss only transplanted the doctrines of Wyclif from England to Bohemia. Yet this bald statement, leaving out of consideration all indigenous events, goes too far. There is no doubt of the vast influence of Wyclif on Bohemian thinkers. Huss's works are more or less justly said to be a cento of extracts from those of Wyclif, and it is doubtful whether Huss would have been burned, had it not been for the condemnation of Wyclif's doctrines by the Council of Constance.

The relations between the two countries were close; Anna, sister of King Wenzel, had married Richard II of England, and had favored Wyclif and encouraged him in the translation of the Bible into English. Many students went from Bohemia to Oxford and brought back the doctrines of the English reformer; this was true especially of Jerome of Prague, destined later to be a fellow-martyr with Huss. Huss himself became an earnest student of Wyclif's works, especially of his philosophical doctrines. The chief accusation against him at Constance, expressed or implied, was that he was a follower of the English heretic.

Yet Wyclif alone could not have produced the Hussite movement, were it not for other causes, chiefly pertaining to national conditions. Many points of difference in doctrine exist between him and Huss, who only approved of certain of his teachings, and especially differed from him in regard to the doctrine of transubstantiation. Wyclif, then, was only one—although a very important one—of the elements which make up the Reformation of Huss.

We have already discussed the religious and national traditions which formed the background to the movement begun by Huss. We must now turn our attention for a brief time to three men who are known as the forerunners of Huss in Bohemia itself, who laid the foundations on which he built, by promulgating certain doctrines of reformatory tendency, by laying bare the corrupt condition of the Church and by preparing the vast majority of the Bohemian people to follow the lead of Huss when he should appear.

The first of these forerunners of Huss was Conrad of Waldhausen, so called from a small market-place of the same name in Austria, where he was born. It was through Charles IV, who was impressed by his learning and energy, that he came to Prague, where he spent many years as preacher at the Church of St. Gallus. His success was enormous; not only was his church crowded, so that he had to preach in the open square be-

fore it, but his sermons, in which he scourged the pride, licentiousness, and avarice of the people, wrought a most remarkable change in the life and conduct of the multitude. Women laid aside their rich garments and costly jewels, men who had for years been stained by vice and sin became converted and lived pious and religious lives. Even usurers and public thieves gave up their ill-gotten gains. It was chiefly against the corruption of the clergy that he preached, especially the monks, who at that time were despised and hated throughout the whole Christian world for their overbearing pride, luxury, and neglect of duty. In his sermons and writings we see already the germs of the essential doctrine of Protestantism, that the gospel should be preached to the people and that outward forms do not insure salvation. It was no wonder, then, that Conrad was cordially hated by the clergy, nor that the usual weapons in such cases, accusations of heresy, were directed against him. Yet owing to the continued favor shown him by Charles IV he escaped all snares laid for him by his enemies, and was finally put in charge of the most important parish in Prague, that of the Teyn Church, where he died December 8, 1369.

Still more influential in preparing the way for the Hussite movement was Militz of Kremsier, to whom Neander gives the credit of the first impulse toward the Reformation in Moravia.

He was for many years employed in the Court

of Charles IV, and in 1360 was made one of the imperial secretaries. He had everything a man could wish for, was well off in worldly goods, had a good position and the favor of the king; yet suddenly in 1363 he declared his intention to renounce all his honors and worldly prosperity in order to serve Christ in poverty and humility,—all this in spite of the earnest remonstrance of his archbishop, Arnest, who said to him, "What better thing could you do than to help your poor over-shepherd in the care of his flock?" However, he came back to Prague and began to preach, first in the Church of St. Nicholas, then in the Church of St. Ægidius in Old Prague. At first he was not successful, but little by little the interest in his sermons grew until the number of hearers was so great that he had to preach at different places, often three times, or even five times a day. Not only, however, did he stir the masses with religious enthusiasm, but he likewise won the admiration of the educated classes by his learning and literary talent. He thus became the spiritual director of nearly all Prague. Many of the worst classes were converted, and he founded an institution in the lowest quarter of the city, something like the social settlements of modern times, the expenses of which he paid himself out of funds contributed by charitable persons.

Studying and brooding over the Bible, especially the prophetic books and the Apocalypse, he believed he had made an important discovery; *i. e.*,

that the prophecy concerning the coming of Christ was to fall within the period 1365-67, and he wrote a learned book thereon. He found signs of the Antichrist in all classes and conditions of men, but above all in the clergy, from the archbishop to the lowest monk. This naturally led to hostility on the part of the clergy, yet still the emperor kept his kindly feeling toward him, and when in 1367 he appealed to Pope Urban V against his accusers and went to the papal court himself, he brought with him a letter of recommendation from the emperor. In spite of this he was imprisoned in Ara Coeli, but was released later, returned to Prague, where he remained for a while. Then in 1374, again accused of heresy by the clergy, he went to Avignon, where he fell sick and died before the question of his orthodoxy was settled.

The influence of Militz on the whole Bohemian reform movement was a mighty one. His extraordinary power as a popular preacher stirred the masses of the people to their depths, and prepared the way for the terrible fanaticism of the Hussite wars after the death of Huss himself. Like Conrad of Waldhausen, however, his chief influence was exercised by preaching. A third man in the list of Huss's forerunners possessed what had been wanting in the other two; that is, the literary skill to spread his doctrines broadcast throughout the land, far beyond the limits of his own personal influence.

This was done by Matthias of Janow, who unlike his predecessors was of gentle birth, being the son of a Bohemian knight. While a student at the University of Prague he became an earnest follower of Militz. He had an excellent preparation. After completing his studies at Prague he spent six years at the University of Paris, where he received the degree of Master of Arts. From Pope Urban VI, whom he visited in Rome, he received the position of Canon of the Cathedral Church of Prague. He died November 30, 1394.

Janow was not a pastor or a preacher like Conrad or Militz, but he exerted his influence chiefly through his writings, by means of which he laid the intellectual foundations for Huss's work. Chief among these writings was the *De Regulis Veteris et Novi Testamentis,* which, as Palacky says, considering the real subject of it, might have more appropriately been called "Studies on True and False Christianity." Although this book is forgotten to-day, it exerted the most extraordinary influence at its appearance. In it he discussed the doctrine of the Eucharist and advocated the frequent, even daily, administration of the Lord's Supper, and especially the restoration of the custom of the early Church to give to the laity both the wine and the host. He was in this respect the forerunner of Jacobel and the whole Calixtine party, which played so great a part in the later Hussite movement.

In his *De Sacerdotum et Monachorum Carnalium Abominatione* he scourges the corruption of the times, and in the tractate *De Revelatione Christi et Antichristi* he gave the signs of the coming of Antichrist. Antichrist he declares is not flesh and blood, but spirit, the spirit in the Church that is opposed to the Spirit of Christ. Whosoever works against virtue in unrighteousness or against wisdom and love, and does this knowingly and purposely, he is the Antichrist. The higher position such a man has in the Church, the higher is Antichrist, and if he is head of the Church then he is the highest Antichrist of all. Formerly Antichrist used physical power against the Church, then he sought to undermine it by heresies; now he shows himself under the form of piety, bedecked with art, science, religion, pomp, and circumstance.

Among the signs which announce the coming of Antichrist Janow gives the mingling of the spiritual things with the wordly, the temporal with the eternal; the neglect of duty and general corruption of the clergy; the divisions and schisms in the Church at large, and the bitter contest between Dominicans and Franciscans, priests and monks, the prevalence of luxury, dead ceremonies, the worship of images and the craze for miracles. Like Dante, a hundred years before, he laments the gift of Constantine as the basis of the false claim on the part of the pope for temporal

power. He scourges bishops, doctors, priests, and especially monks, who suck the blood of the poor by begging. He declares that human laws, fasts, feasts, processions, etc., had driven into the background the commands of God, that the sale of indulgences, the worship of relics and miracles drew people from true piety, and finally declares it his aim to help abolish all these accretions and to lead the Church back to its original simplicity. "I believe," he prophesies, "that all these above-named works of men, ordinances, and ceremonies will be utterly extirpated, cut up by the roots and cease; and that God alone will be exalted and His word will abide forever; and the time is close at hand when these ordinances shall be abolished."

Although Matthias did not openly combat the hierarchical system, yet he must be looked upon as a forerunner of Protestantism when we consider the spirit of his teaching. Among other things he declared that the law of the Holy Ghost as seen in the Bible is enough for the government of the Church; that all human ordinances and traditions should be abolished and the Church led back to the simplicity of apostolic times; that the only condition for the salvation of man is to be born again of the spirit by faith in Jesus Christ, and that this is the pure gift of grace on the part of God; that in this faith every man has free access to God and to Jesus Christ, and the community of those who know and exercise this freedom, and

they alone, form the true Christian Church. The logical result of all these doctrines would be utterly to destroy the whole fabric of the hierarchical system, from the pope down to the humblest priest, to abolish forever all forms and ceremonies which stood between man and his God, and the reduction of public worship to its simplest elements. The influence of Janow was very great; he gave to Huss the first impulse to his reformatory movement, and his writings scattered broadcast over all Bohemia created a widespread desire for a change in religious matters.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF HUSS.

When we consider the place occupied by John Huss in the world's history, it is a source of the deepest regret that we possess so few details as to his early life and the development of his religious consciousness. Biography and especially autobiography are among the most fascinating as well as most useful kinds of literature. What a loss to the world it would have been had St. Augustine never written his Confessions! We have practically a complete knowledge of the external and internal life of Luther and Wesley, but of the story of John Huss we know only the details of the last few years which precede his death and martyrdom at Constance.

It is true that these years are the ones that are of most importance, for in them he accomplished the work, the effects of which will be felt as long as time shall last. It is likewise a matter of rejoicing that we have not only the testimony of friends, the reports of committees, and the decrees of the Council of Constance, but a minute account of Huss's life in prison by Peter of Mladenowic, as well as a number of letters written by Huss himself.

John Huss was born July 6, 1369, just forty-six years to a day before his death at Constance. Like Luther, he belonged to the common people, his parents being peasants. What their name was is now unknown, for Huss took his name from the little market-town of Hussinec, where he was born, or rather from the castle near by called Hus.* Everything relating to his childhood and early school life is either utterly unknown or based upon unreliable tradition. The earliest real information we have concerning him is his appearance at the University of Prague, where he studied under the most celebrated men of the day, among whom were John of Stiekna, Nicholas of Leitomisl, and Stanislaus of Znaim (who later became his bitter enemy). In September, 1393, he received the degree of Bachelor of Free Arts, in 1394 that of Bachelor of Theology, and in 1396 that of Master of Arts. As his rank among those who graduated with him at this time was only about the middle, it indicates that his teachers did not regard him as a man of unusual ability. In 1398 he appeared as a public teacher at the university, and in the following year, 1399, defended certain propositions of Wyclif, thus coming into contest for the first time with his colleagues.

At that time the University of Prague was one of the greatest universities in the world, ranking

* The word *Hus* in Bohemian signifies a goose, a pun often alluded to by himself.

with those of Paris, Bologna, and Oxford. In 1408 there were said to be as many as two hundred doctors, five hundred Bachelors of Arts, and thirty thousand students. All sciences then known were taught, every Master of Arts had the privilege at his own will of giving public and private lectures, and every student could attend what lectures he pleased. This perfect freedom, both in hearing and in giving lectures, explains undoubtedly, as Palacky says, the extraordinary crowds of students that came to Prague from all parts of Europe.

That Huss made the most of his opportunities we know from his works, which show him to be a man of high scholarship, although by no means so able a thinker as Wyclif, or so brilliant a dialectician as his younger contemporary, Jerome of Prague. Yet, although he was an eager student, he realized that learning is not everything. In one of his synodal sermons he declares: "First of all must we learn that which is most necessary to salvation, that which stimulates us to love; for we should learn not for vainglory or curiosity, but to the edification of ourselves and our neighbor, and to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are some who wish to know in order that they may be known of men, and that is degrading vanity; there are others who wish to know for the sake of knowing, and that is curiosity; and there are still others who wish to know in order to sell their knowledge for wealth and honor, and

that is ignoble desire for gain. But there are likewise some who desire to know in order to edify, and that is love; and still others who desire to know in order to be edified themselves, and that is wisdom."

Although he was not a great scholar, yet his learning was broad and solid, as the reading of his books and the reports of his disputations abundantly show. He knew something of Greek, less of Hebrew; but he was thoroughly grounded in Latin, and at home in philosophy, especially Aristotle and Plato. As to his knowledge of Church history and the Church fathers, his works, full of quotations from Chrysostom, Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, etc., give ample testimony. At the Council of Constance he later showed himself to be no mean adversary of the great lights of the philosophical and theological world, especially Gerson and D'Ailly.

At that early time he was still a devout adherent to the doctrines and even forms of the Church, for we are told how in 1393 he gave the last four groschen he had to his confessor, "so that he had nothing more to eat than dry bread." His life must have been blameless from his youth up, for his bitterest enemies never ventured to cast the least aspersion on his personal conduct. He himself, it is true, just before his death blames himself for vanity, anger, and frivolous amusements. In a letter to a certain Master Martin,

which Huss had written before his departure from Bohemia, but which he had requested should not be opened before Master Martin was assured that Huss must die, he writes as follows: "You have known my preaching and exhortations from your childhood; but I beseech you, by the mercy of our Lord, not to follow me in any of the vanities into which you have seen me fall. Know, alas! that before I became a priest I consumed a great deal of time in playing chess, and that in so doing I was often angry myself and provoked others to anger. I beg your prayers for this sin of mine and for my innumerable transgressions;"—

> "O dignitosa coscienza e netta,
> Come t'è picciol fallo amaro morso!"*

As a teacher Huss must have been successful, for not only was he supported in his later struggles by practically the whole body of students, but we find him making rapid advancement in his academic career. On October 15, 1401, he was elected Dean of the Philosophical Faculty, and a year later he became rector of the whole university. These facts in themselves should warn us not to go too far in denying to Huss, as some have done, the possession of a high degree of learning and administrative ability.

One phase of Huss's education, which seems

* "O noble and tender conscience,
How a little fault fills thee with bitter remorse!"
—Dante, Purg. III, 8-9.

puerile to us to-day, was of vast importance at that time and fraught with baleful influence on his after career; namely, his system of philosophy. During the whole of the Middle Ages philosophy and theology were one, and under the name of Scholasticism absorbed the attention of the brightest minds in the Church. As the dogmas of Christianity were absolutely true, and could be denied by none but heretics, the problem of philosophy was no longer to seek after truth, but to explain the dogmas of the Church, deduce their consequences, and show their harmony with human reason. Beginning with Scotus Erigena, carried on by St. Anselm, Abelard, Petrus Lombard, and others, Scholasticism reached its climax in St. Thomas Aquinas, whose *Summa Theologiæ* became the official philosophy of the Church, a position which it nominally holds even to-day.

Scholasticism, however, early became split up into two great parties—the Realists and the Nominalists—corresponding somewhat to the modern idealists (Realists) and materialists (Nominalists). The Realists declared that Universals (*i. e.,* the Ideas of Platonism) actually existed, while the individuals which make up the world of phenomena are only a fleeting symbol or sign of their unchangeable and eternal prototypes. On the other hand, common sense tended to regard Universals as mere notions of the mind—*vocis flatus,* signs and abstractions, while the individuals alone are

real. The motto of this branch of Scholasticism was *Universalia sunt Nomina,* hence the name Nominalism. Among the earliest champions of Nominalism was Roscellinus, who was bitterly opposed by Anselm and William of Champeaux, the great champions of Realism; midway between the two was Abelard. While the doctrine of the Nominalists was summed up in the formula *"Universalia post Rem,"* and that of the Realists in *"Universalia ante Rem,"* Albelard's view is expressed in the words *"Universalia nec ante Rem nec post Rem sed in Re."*

Strangely enough, while the growing spread of Nominalism, especially through William of Occam, led largely to the breaking down of the universal power of the Church, and was thus naturally allied to the doctrines of the Reformation, it was not the philosophical system of Huss, but that of his most distinguished adversaries at the Council of Constance, Gerson and D'Ailly. At the time of Huss's appearance in the world of public life the reigning system of philosophy, both in Paris and throughout Germany, was Nominalism. John Wyclif, however, was a Realist, and it was through the study of his philosophical books, known in Bohemia as early as 1285, that Huss and many others became Realists. Wyclif's book, *"De Universalibus Realibus"* ("On the Reality of Universal Concepts") was for years a text-book in the University of Prague. Huss became in a short time

an enthusiastic disciple of the English Reformer, at first, however, looking on him merely as a philosopher. Yet the *odium philosophicum* thus aroused against him had much to do with his death later.

Thus we see that Huss's first prominence in public was connected with his philosophy. Realism had become very widely spread in Bohemia, and he was looked upon as its chief exponent, and was followed by the vast majority of Bohemian youth. On the other side, however, a hostile party, consisting chiefly of foreigners, was ranged against him. Among the scholars who at this time sided with him were Stanislaus of Znaim, Peter of Znaim, and Stephen Paletz, all of whom later became his bitterest enemies; others, who remained faithful to him were Jerome of Prague, Nicholas of Leitomisl, Jacob of Mies (better known as Jacobel), and Peter of Mladenowic, who later wrote the account of Huss's life in the prisons of Constance.

All these things form more or less important parts of the events which led Huss to his reformatory efforts; but they in themselves would have been of little influence had it not been for other events which soon took place.

Among the greatest gifts of Huss was that of public oratory. He developed a power in preaching which soon made him widely known; and so when the famous Bethlehem Chapel was

in need of a preacher in 1402 it was natural that those in charge should think of him. The establishment of this most interesting institution was undoubtedly due to the influence of Janow and Militz. Two citizens of Prague—John of Mülheim, and Kreuz—conceived the idea of a place where the gospel could be heard by the people in their native tongue, and to this end they built at their own expense a chapel, to which they gave the name of Bethlehem. Among other things contained in its charter was the stipulation that sermons should be preached in the Bohemian language in the morning and afternoon of every Sunday and on holidays.

Huss was the fourth person to be called to the office of preacher. His success was extraordinary. In the words of Palacky, "The sermons preached during many years by this man in the Bethlehem Chapel of Old Prague were among the most important events of his time. Less coarse in his sermons than Conrad of Waldhausen, less exaggerated in his views than Militz, he did not affect his hearers so powerfully as his predecessors; and yet his success was far more lasting. He appealed especially to the common sense of his hearers, aroused their interest, taught and convinced them; and yet he was not wanting in impressiveness. The keenness and clearness of his mind, the tact with which he penetrated to the very heart of a question, the ease with which he

knew how to develop it before the eyes of all, the wide reading, especially in the Holy Scriptures, the firmness and logic with which he proved a whole system of principles, raised him far above his colleagues and contemporaries. To all this we may add the deep earnestness of his character, his devout spirit, a personal conduct in which even his enemies could find nothing to blame, a burning zeal for the moral elevation of the people, as well as for the reformation of the ecclesiastical conditions of his time; and at the same time boldness, firmness, a strange seeking after popularity, and love for fame, which looked upon the martyr's crown as the highest goal of human life." Not only were his sermons listened to by vast throngs of the lower classes, but by the students and the aristocracy as well. Even the queen herself came to Bethlehem Chapel nearly every Sunday, and made Huss her personal confessor.

Of his early sermons we know largely only from hearsay; yet we know on broad lines their characteristic features. They covered the whole field of Church doctrines, based on the Scripture for the day; they laid bare the hypocrisy and corruption of the lax clergy; showed the contrast between the teachings of Christ as seen in the Gospels and the whole system of the Roman hierarchy; they boldly attacked the crying evils of the Church, such as the widespread sale of indulgences, and compared the entry of Christ into Jerusalem with the luxury of prelates and bishops.

The appointment of Huss to the position of preacher at Bethlehem Chapel was not only epoch-making for the Bohemian Reformation, but had the greatest possible influence on his own character. It was here that his eyes were first opened to see the whole truth as it is in Christ Jesus. In preparing for his sermons he studied the Bible thoroughly; and more and more it grew upon him how great the contrast was between the gospel and the Church of his own day. He could not help criticising by means of this standard the conduct of the clergy, from the pope down to the lowest priest; he could not help seeing how much the claims of universal power on the part of the papacy were at variance with the statement of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world." He thus laid the foundation of that unshakable principle, that the Bible alone is the only true code of the Christian life, which was later to lead him to the stake.

But while his own character was being formed, and while the common people heard him gladly, by his fierce onslaughts against the clergy he became the object of their bitter hatred. Yet if he had not gone further than this he would have suffered no harm. All Christendom at that time felt the scandal of the clergy, and proclaimed the necessity of reform. Huss was no more outspoken in his scourging of the corruptions of the Church than Gerson and D'Ailly, who afterwards did so much to destroy him at the Council of Constance;

nay, one of the chief reasons for calling that council itself was for the express purpose of reforming the clergy. In Prague itself Huss was supported by those highest in authority, both in Church and State. King Wenzel was favorable to him, and the Archbishop Zbynek ordered him to report to him all cases of corruption among the clergy that might come under his notice, and in addition made him synodal preacher.

Several things, however, soon led to an increase of the hatred against Huss, tended to estrange from him many who had hitherto been his friends, and finally led to a state of affairs in which retraction or martyrdom was the only alternative. The first of these was the so-called miracle of Wilsnack. It seems that a church had been destroyed in the town of the above name, in the district of Priegnitz, and in a cavity of a stone altar, which had been left partly standing, three wafers had been found, colored red as if with blood; it was declared by the priests that this was the blood of Christ. The fame of this supposed miracle was spread far and wide throughout all Europe. Wilsnack became a place of pilgrimage, to which came great crowds from Hungary, Poland, and even the Scandinavian countries of the distant north. A shrewd suspicion was excited that all was not right, and that the priests of Wilsnack had used tricks and falsehood in order to encourage the pilgrimages which were so profitable to them. Archbishop Zbynek forbade

his own people to take part in these pilgrimages, and appointed a committee of three to inquire into the matter. Among them was John Huss, to whose influence we may largely ascribe the rendering of a report adverse to the genuineness of the supposed miracles. It was on this occasion that he wrote his tract, "De Omni Sanguine Christi Glorificati," in which, although he remains perfectly orthodox in regard to the doctrine of transubstantiation, he yet shows himself utterly opposed to the superstitions and frauds so intimately connected with the worship of relics and the exploitation of miracles.

The report of the committee showed that the so-called miracles were fraudulent. It was said that the foot of a boy had been healed; "We found that his foot was worse than before." Two blind women were said to have received their sight; "They confessed before many people, before us and the notary, that they had never been blind, although suffering from poor sight." A citizen of Prague, whose hand was withered, offered at Wilsnack a silver hand. Wishing to know what the priest would say about this hand, he remained there three days. Then he heard the priest in his own presence say: "Hear, children, about a new miracle. Behold, a citizen of Prague has been cured of a withered hand, through the blood of Christ; in witness whereof he has brought this silver hand as an offering." Then the citizen,

who was among the congregation, raised his hand and said, "See, here is my hand, withered as before."

All this made a tremendous stir throughout the land. If the miracles of Wilsnack were frauds, how about all the others? The whole subject of relics and miracles was in danger of being brought into indifference and contempt, and an unfailing source of power and financial profit would be lost. No wonder that Huss's prominence in this affair embittered the hatred which his unsparing denunciation of the clergy had already brought upon him. Years after he was falsely accused of heresy on the question of transubstantiation, largely owing to his activity in the affair of Wilsnack.

Huss's article "De Omni Sanguine" marks his first appearance before the world as a writer and reformer. Another event which had the deepest influence, both on the intellectual and religious development of Huss himself and on the whole reformatory movement, was the spread of Wyclif's doctrines in Bohemia. As we have already said, several of his books had been known before 1385. They were now read with intense enthusiasm at the University of Prague, and counted among their adherents some of the most distinguished men of the day, among them Nicholas of Leitomisl, Stanislaus of Znaim, Stephen Paletz, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague.

The latter, who was to have his name indis-

solubly joined to that of Huss by suffering the same death, and for the same cause at Constance, had done much for the study of Wyclif in Bohemia. Some years younger than Huss, born of a noble family of Prague, endowed with keen intellect and extraordinary oratorical powers, he had studied in nearly all the universities of Europe, among them Heidelberg, Cologne, Oxford, and Paris. At the latter place he received the degree of Master of Arts. On his return from Oxford he had brought back a number of Wyclif's books, hitherto unknown to his countrymen. We have his own words for this, when before the Council of Constance he said: "I confess that when I was still a youth, full of love for learning, I went to England, and hearing the fame of Wyclif, how that he was a man of fine, keen, and extraordinary intellect, I made copies of his 'Dialogue' and 'Trialogue' and brought them back to Prague."

Through the efforts of Huss and Jerome, supported by the others mentioned above, an extraordinary impetus was given to the study of Wyclif's doctrines at the university. When Archbishop Zbynek, who at first was somewhat indifferent, became alarmed and had received a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the effect that not only the English Church, but also the University of Oxford had condemned the works of Wyclif, it was too late to stem the tide.

There is no doubt that as the Wilsnack affair

gave the first impetus to an open break between Huss and the hierarchy, the whole Wyclif movement gave an additional and still more powerful impulse thereto. It furnished to his enemies what they had not hitherto had, a weapon in the form of accusations of heresy. An untiring and unremitting effort was made to fasten the whole obloquy attached to the name of Wyclif upon Huss himself. In all attacks made against the latter, from now on till the last tragic episode at Constance, the two names were inextricably bound together.

The issues had now been joined. Instigated by the prelates of Prague, Pope Innocent VII ordered the Archbishop Zbynek to take immediate and drastic measures to destroy Wyclifism in Bohemia. In spite of the earnest efforts of such men as Huss and Stanislaus of Znaim, a decree was passed May 28, 1403, to the effect that henceforth no member of the university should publicly or privately teach or help spread the doctrines contained in the twenty-four articles of Wyclif, condemned by the London Council in 1382, or in the additional twenty-one articles now extracted from Wyclif's works by Master John Hübner. This act of condemnation, as Palacky says, was the first great public act which bore witness to the deep cleft in the views of Huss's contemporaries concerning the Christian Church and its teachings. One consequence of all these

things was an increased bitterness against Huss, who never for a moment ceased his sermons against Ecclesiastical corruptions. In spite of the friendly feelings of the archbishop, he was forced to deprive Huss of his position as synodal preacher.

All these merely local struggles, however, were soon overshadowed by events of world-wide importance. The one great burning question in all Christendom was now the great schism, which scandalized all classes and did more to undermine the power of the papacy in the minds of the people than any other thing. The roots of it run back to the times of Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII. After the death of that celebrated usurper of the papal chair, who "came in like a fox, ruled like a lion, and died like a dog," Benedict IX ruled the Church for the short period of eight months, and in 1305 Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux,

"Di ver ponente un pastor senza legge," *

made a shameful bargain with Philip the Fair, by which he was elected pope under the title of Clement V, one of the conditions being that he remove the seat of the papacy from Rome to France.

Thus began the famous Babylonian Captivity of the papacy, during which Avignon and not Rome was the center of the Christian Church. During

* "From the West a lawless shepherd."—Dante, Inferno, XIX, 83.

all these years the French popes were little more than the tools of the King of France, and Avignon itself became a sink of corruption, both moral and political, a corruption that spread through all lands. During the years that followed, a stronger and stronger desire arose within the Church for the pope's return to Rome. Petrarch in a letter to Pope Urban V, elected in 1362, used all his eloquence in urging him to transfer his seat to the Holy City, even going so far as to assure the pleasure-loving cardinals that Italy would afford them as good wines as the South of France. And in similar manner did St. Catherine of Siena call on his successor, Gregory XI, to accomplish this object.

With a part of his cardinals Gregory came to Rome in 1376, but died soon after. His death was the signal of the most bitter quarrels between the cardinals of France and those of Italy. After many contests and intrigues, the cardinals who were at Rome elected Urban VI, a Neapolitan; but not long after many of those who opposed the election of an Italian pope went to Avignon and protested against the validity of Urban's election, declaring that it had been made under constraint. Next they went to Ferredi, where they could feel safe from all interference, and elected Robert of Cambray, who took the name of Clement VII. This was the beginning of the great schism in the Western Church, which, as Neander says,

"Was one of the most important of the links in the chain of events which contributed to the overthrow of the papal absolutism of the Middle Ages, and to prepare for the great reaction of the Christian mind which took place in the sixteenth century."

This scandalous state of affairs divided all Christendom, one party, headed by France, upholding Clement VII, the other—including Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, and England—in favor of Urban VI. A third party, however, which grew more and more powerful as the intrigue and corruption caused by the schism grew more and more scandalous, remained neutral, and openly declared that the only salvation for the Church was the call for a general Œcumenical Council.

This desire culminated in the Council of Pisa, which met for two chief reasons: first, to reform the corruption of the clergy; and second, to put an end to the schism. At this time Benedict XIII was pope at Avignon, and Gregory XII pope at Rome. The Council declared these men schismatics and heretics, deposed them from all their ecclesiastical dignities, and thereupon proceeded to elect a new pope, the Archbishop of Milan, who took the name of Alexander V. He lived but a short time, and was followed by one of the most corrupt and execrable characters in Church history, Balthazar Cossa, stained with all manner of vice, and even accused of having gotten rid of his predecessor

by poison. In 1410 he mounted the papal throne under the name of John XXIII.

Alas for the expectations of those who had hoped so much from the Council of Pisa! Matters became worse than ever. As soon as he was elected Alexander had dissolved the Council without keeping his promise to reform the clergy. Neither Benedict XIII nor Gregory XII would resign, and they were still supported by many of their princely adherents. Thus the election of another pope had only added a new division of parties, and the schism now became more scandalous than ever.

In Bohemia, King Wenzel had promised to keep neutral between the two popes, Benedict and Gregory, and had urged the prelates and the University of Prague likewise to remain neutral, as the University and prelates of Paris had done. Archbishop Zbynek, however, and the German branch of the University refused to give up their allegiance to Pope Gregory XII. Huss and the Bohemian members of the University openly declared in favor of the king's views, and advocated a neutral attitude in regard to the schism. This was the beginning of the quarrel between Huss and Zbynek, who hitherto had been favorably inclined to him, and had approved of his efforts in the way of reform. It also led to the first Church censure pronounced against Huss. This came in the form of an order from the archbishop to stop his preaching, an order which Huss refused to obey.

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Closely connected with this question of neutrality was the famous secession of the German members of the University of Prague, who, following the lead of Archbishop Zbynek, refused to give up their allegiance to Gregory XII, in spite of all efforts on the part of King Wenzel to induce them to do so. This called attention anew to a question which had before been agitated, and in which patriotic fervor was to join hands with religious feelings. Huss, who was an ardent patriot, as well as reformer, took a leading part in these events, and was later, though wrongfully, accused of having been the chief instigator of the movement. We have already seen that of the four nations constituting the University, three were practically composed of Germans; thus the Polish nation, in spite of its name, consisted chiefly of Silesians, Pomeranians, and Prussians. These Germans invariably voted as one body against the Bohemians, whom they thus outnumbered three to one. This they did now (1409) in standing up for Gregory XII, in spite of the fact that a majority of the cardinals, the Universities of Paris, Bologna, and Oxford, and most of the Christian rulers of the world had given him up.

There was a certain element of treason in this conduct on the part of the German nations of the University, inasmuch as Pope Gregory supported Rupert, the rival of King Wenzel, as candidate for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. The

influential position of the Germans had long been a sore spot to the Bohemians. Introduced in large numbers by Charles IV, they had become predominant, not only in the University, where their three votes gave them a practical monopoly, but in the city of Prague as well. As they were faithful supporters of the Roman Church, they were naturally bitter opponents of Huss and his reformatory ideas. On the other hand, the great body of Bohemians were his warm supporters. As long as the Germans had retained their influential position in Prague, Huss could do little more than stir up strife; as soon as they left, all Bohemia, except the higher clergy, became a unit in his favor. Hence we see that what at first sight seems merely a question of local university interest, was destined to play an important rôle in shaping the destiny of the Hussite movement.

The question of votes on the part of the four nations now had a practical interest. The king sent a commission to the University of Paris to inquire into the method of voting in vogue there, and on receiving the information sought he immediately promulgated a decree to the effect that hereafter the native-born Bohemian nation in all decrees and university business should have three votes, while the foreign nations should have but one between them. This mandate, published January 18, 1409, was a terrible blow to the Germans, who at once foresaw that it meant the loss forever

of their influence in shaping the business and teachings of the University. It meant likewise the utter loss of prestige for the University of Prague as a cosmopolitan institution; regarded up to this time as the equal in learning and number of students to the sister Universities of Oxford and Paris, it was soon to sink to the level of a national school only.

Filled with indignation and excitement, the three German nations—the Saxon, Bavarian, and Polish—handed in to the king on February 6th a respectful, though energetic, protest against the royal decree; but finding they could expect no help from him they met together on February 16th, and swore one to the other that they would sooner leave the country than accept the new order of things.

Since in the midst of all these agitations there was a deadlock in the management of university affairs, and no action could be taken, the king himself appointed a rector of the University and a dean of the Philosophical Faculty, both of them Bohemians. Whereupon the German students and masters, carrying out their oath, began to leave Prague in crowds, some on foot, some on horseback, and some in carriages. It is said that as many as two thousand left the city in one day. Practically no students were left except Bohemians. The German universities, however, gained from this secession; not only were those already founded

increased in numbers, but a new university, that of Leipzig, was organized this same year of 1409, largely composed of students who had left Prague. This is the story of the famous secession of German students from Prague, an event fraught with consequence to Germany and Bohemia in general, and to Huss and the Hussite movement in particular.

CHAPTER IV.

HUSS AND THE ROMAN HIERARCHY.

For the moment, however, the turn of affairs seemed favorable to King Wenzel and Huss. The Council of Pisa had recognized the former as the regular King of Rome, and had ignored the claims of Rupert. Huss himself was made court-preacher.

The University was reorganized on a new basis, and as the Germans had been the chief opponents of the Wyclif party, the latter now rose to the leading rôle in the teachings of that institution. The king, and the nobility for the most part, were on their side; only the archbishop and the higher clergy were against them. Huss seemed now to have reached the climax of his glory and influence. He was famous throughout the land. As an evidence of his prominence we may mention his election in October, 1409, to be the first rector of the reorganized University.

This apparent prosperity, however, was but of short duration. His enemies were still active. At first apparently unsuccessful in their attempts to destroy him, from now on they increased their efforts, and little by little, aided by outward events, and by his own fearlessness in championing what

he thought was right, and in scourging the injustice and unrighteousness on the part of the pope, they brought on the final catastrophe of 1415.

Archbishop Zbynek, who had remained loyal to Pope Gregory XII during the struggle on the question of neutrality in regard to the rival popes, a question which as we have seen was largely responsible for the secession of the German nations from the University, now suddenly turned about and declared in favor of Alexander V, the new pope elected by the Council of Pisa. This action was ominous for Huss and the Wyclif party, for almost immediately Zbynek obtained a Bull from the newly elected pope, authorizing him to root out all heresy in his diocese, to prevent at all hazards the spread of Wyclif's doctrines, to require all those who possessed copies of his writings to deliver them up, and to forbid all preaching except in places privileged by the Church.

This Bull at once relighted the slumbering fires of contest. Huss accused the archbishop of slandering Bohemia and appealed to the pope, but in vain. He was cited to Rome to give account of himself and his teaching before the Papal See. Nor did the death of Alexander, a short time after this, affect the condition of affairs, for the policy of uncompromising hostility to Huss was continued by his successor, John XXIII.

In Prague itself, the Synod, dominated by the anti-Huss party, declared on June 16, 1410, Wyc-

lif's books to be heretical, and ordered all copies in Prague to be gathered up and publicly burned. In spite of the fact that the vast majority of the members of the University were followers of Huss, they were obedient for the most part to this decree, and handed in the copies of Wyclif they possessed.

Still more radical, however, was the decree forbidding all preaching in private chapels. This order struck Huss in his most vulnerable spot. Hitherto he had not been openly disobedient to the highest ecclesiastical authorities, and in all questions discussed he had made an appeal directly to the pope, as an obedient and respectful son of the Church. If, however, he now should remain obedient and give up his preaching at Bethlehem Chapel, he would be completely reduced to silence. This he could not conscientiously do, for it seemed to him that his duty to God was greater than that to any man, even the pope himself. From now on Huss was placed in a position of contumacy, not merely against the local archbishop, but the Church of Rome itself.

On June 25, 1410, he gathered his friends in the Bethlehem Chapel, had a true account of the whole matter drawn up by a public notary, and in the name of the University and practically all Bohemia, nobles, cities, and towns, sent a petition to John XXIII, begging him to enjoin the archbishop from burning Wyclif's books, and from prohibit-

ing preaching in the private chapels. During all this time, however, he never for a day ceased to preach. In similar manner the whole University, doctors, masters, and students, except a few who supported the archbishop, begged the king not to allow the burning of Wyclif's books. Whereupon the king ordered Zbynek to suspend action until he, the king, could examine the question thoroughly.

In spite of Huss's appeal to the pope and the king's order, Zbynek, weary of the delay, proceeded to carry out the decree of the Synod. On July 16th he gathered the prelates and clergy together, surrounded by armed men, had the books of Wyclif piled up in the midst, and amid the singing of the *Te Deum Laudamus* had them set on fire. At the same time the bells of all the churches in Prague announced to the whole people what had been done. Two days after, July 18th, he pronounced the ban of the Church over Huss and all his friends.

All these events produced the greatest commotion, not only among the students, but the great body of the people as well. The whole city was split into two hostile factions, who not only mutually insulted each other by means of songs and parodies, but soon came to acts of violence. At one time the archbishop himself was forced to retire from the cathedral while celebrating mass; at another time when a priest attempted to proclaim from his pulpit the ban over Huss, six men

with drawn swords attacked and nearly killed him. The king made a vain attempt to allay the storm thus aroused; on the one hand he forbade on pain of death the singing of satirical songs, and on the other he ordered the archbishop to pay the owners of the books he had burnt; and when the latter refused to obey Wenzel gave orders to stop the payment of the salary of all those connected with the burning of the books.

Thus affairs stood for some time in a state of suspense. Huss and his followers were hopeful of final victory, confident as they were in the support of the nobility, magistrates, the common people, and even the king and queen. Huss continued to preach at Bethlehem Chapel, which was filled by enormous crowds. He became more and more bold, and carried the audience with him. Once when he spoke of having appealed to the pope, he asked his hearers, "Will you stand by me?" and the whole vast congregation cried out, "Yes, we will stand by you."

They soon found, however, that nothing was to be hoped for from the pope. On August 25, 1410, he returned the appeal of Huss, confirmed the Bull of his predecessor, Alexander V, requested the archbishop to continue the measures already taken, and ordered Huss within a certain time to appear at the papal court, there to give account of himself. The publication of this decree resulted in new disorders. The king himself,

who had no desire to support the hierarchy by force, and was favorably inclined to Huss, wrote to the pope, demanding among other things that the accusation against Huss be withdrawn, and that Bethlehem Chapel be restored to its rights.

This, too, was in vain, for on March 15, 1411, the ban against Huss was proclaimed in all the Churches of Prague except two, the priests of which refused to read it. As this excommunication had no effect, the archbishop laid the whole city of Prague under interdict.

The extraordinary power and influence of Huss was never more apparent than at this crisis. Although the whole weight of ecclesiastical censure, the malediction of the pope himself,—the vice-regent of God on earth,—had been directed against him, it did not shake the loyalty of his friends. Things remained much as before; ban and interdict were ignored. In many of the churches services went on as usual, and Huss continued his sermons at Bethlehem.

Thus the cleft between the people and the clergy grew wider and wider, and the only way of bringing about a reconciliation was for both parties to show something of a spirit of compromise. A plan was formed by the king, by means of which both Huss and Zbynek should promise to abide by the decision of a committee of arbitrators appointed by the king. On July 6th the report of the committee was made public. Among

other things it recommended that the whole matter under discussion should be taken out of the hands of the pope, and settled in Bohemia itself; that the archbishop be requested to sign a document addressed to the pope, to the effect that in the course of his investigations he had not found either in Bohemia or Moravia any heresy; that he had come to a complete understanding with Huss and the University through the mediation of the king; and that he therefore requested John XXIII to recall the censure on Huss, and especially the command to appear before the Roman Curia. On the other side, Huss was to agree to take certain similar steps toward bringing to an end the contest between them.

It seemed for a time as if finally a reconciliation, or at least a *modus vivendi,* was at hand. At the last moment, however, the archbishop failed them. He left Prague secretly, sending word to the king that since he could not obtain an impartial hearing in Bohemia he had gone to Wenzel's brother, Sigismund, king of Hungary. This journey was fatal to him; he fell sick not long after he had crossed the frontiers of Moravia, and died at Presburg, September 28, 1411. His body was brought back to Prague, and buried amid general expressions of sorrow, for even his enemies had never denied him the credit of a good life and a well-meaning heart. Huss himself had never concealed his respect for his character.

After the death of Zbynek a momentary truce took place between Huss and his opponents. The new archbishop, Albic of Unitzow, already well along in years, was by no means the man to continue the aggressive policy of his predecessor. Had it not been for new events, or rather if Huss had not found new fields for his reformatory zeal, it is probable that the whole storm might have ended in peace and quiet.

The occasion of a new outburst of hate and bitterness against Huss, an outburst this time not to be stilled before his death at the stake, was the arrival in Bohemia of Wenzel Tiem, commissioned by the pope to preach a crusade against Ladislaus of Naples, and to sell indulgences toward that end. We have seen how the Council of Pisa had failed to abolish the schism, and had only succeeded in adding to the general disgust by electing a third pope. It is true that most of the rulers of Europe had abandoned Benedict and Gregory, yet some still remained faithful to them. Among those who still supported Gregory XII was Ladislaus, king of Naples, who had driven John XXIII from Rome, whither he had come from Bologna.

This action roused to a fury all the evil passions of that pope. He issued a Bull of excommunication against Ladislaus, and ordered a crusade to be preached against him in all lands which acknowledged his own ecclesiastical authority, promising the same indulgence to all the faithful

who should either fight in person or furnish money toward the carrying on of the war, as had hitherto been promised to all those who took part in the crusades against the Pagans. In May, 1412, the above mentioned papal legate, Wenzel Tiem, came to Prague to conduct the sale of indulgences in Bohemia; and as the king and archbishop made no objections, the business was soon in full sway. "The agents of Tiem appeared in the market-places, each time accompanied by drummers, and invited the people to contribute to the expenses of the pope in his war against Ladislaus, either with money or goods. Three boxes were established in the three principal churches of Prague, in which the money was to be collected. Great crowds gathered around, and a lively business was carried on."

The whole affair, however, created a great stir among the people. Huss himself could not restrain his indignation. He announced, by means of placards posted on the walls throughout the city, that a disputation would be held June 7th on the subject, "Whether according to the laws of Christ it was for the honor of God, the well-being of Christian people, and the best interests of the kingdom, for the followers of Christ to obey the commands of the pope in the matter of his crusade against Ladislaus."

This disputation promised to reopen the old contest between Huss and the hierarchy, and the Theological Faculty of the University besought the

archbishop to forbid its being held. In spite of this, however, the disputation took place amid the greatest excitement. Huss boldly declared that while the temporal power had the right to carry on wars, neither the pope nor bishops were ever justified in wielding the sword in the name of the Church. Christ himself had disapproved of using violence when He was betrayed by Judas, and had healed the ear of the servant of the high priest, wounded by one of His followers. He had prayed for those who had persecuted Him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the pope wishes to overcome his enemies, let him pray for them as Christ did; then will the Lord give him wisdom, so that his enemies can hold out no longer against him.

He especially scourged the whole system of selling indulgences, as utterly at variance with the spirit of Christ and the teaching of the gospel. The power of the priest to forgive sins rested only on repentance and contrition on the part of the guilty one; based on the payment of money or property, it was simony pure and simple, for had not the Savior said, "Freely ye have received, freely give?" The same thing applied to the pope, and the declaration made by some that the pope was infallible he declared to be not only false, but sacrilegious; for this would make the pope equal to Christ Himself. It goes without saying that these bold statements were not received without

strenuous opposition on the part of the adherents of the hierachy.

Although Huss was the leader in this disputation, owing to his prominent position as the head of his party, yet not to him were accorded the honors of the day, but to Jerome of Prague, who in a fiery and eloquent speech so worked on the feelings of his hearers that he was given an ovation and was accompanied to his house by the enthusiastic student body.

The disputation was followed by an event which tended still more to increase the hatred between the two parties. A number of university men, among them Jerome of Prague, organized a parody of the scene two years before, when the books of Wyclif had been publicly burnt. A magnificent procession was instituted, in the midst of which two courtesans sat on a wagon, each with one of the pope's Bulls hanging from her neck by means of ribbons, while before and behind them marched a great crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. Pausing for a time before the archbishop's palace, they proceeded to the market-place in the new city, where a funeral pyre was erected, on which the papal Bulls were burnt.

King Wenzel allowed this public disturbance to go unpunished, but at the same time he published a decree against any further insult to the pope or opposition to the Bull of Indulgences, on pain of death. Nevertheless the disturbances still

went on. In three different churches three young men, apparently having agreed beforehand, when the preacher defended the indulgences cried out aloud: "You lie. We have heard from Master Huss how all that is false." They were cast out of church, flogged, and haled before the magistrates, by whom they were subjected to torture, and when they could not be forced to yield were sentenced to death.

The whole city was in an uproar. Huss felt it his duty to make an effort to rescue the unfortunate men. Followed by a great crowd of students and a number of Masters, he went to the Town Hall, and on being admitted to the presence of the Senate begged earnestly for the lives of the prisoners. "If any one is guilty," he said, "it is I. I have done it. I and all these who are with me are ready to bear the same punishment." The magistrates, alarmed at this demonstration, promised that no blood should be shed. Whereupon Huss quieted the crowd, which rapidly dispersed. The young men in the meantime were secretly hurried away and decapitated. This treacherous and cruel act raised the public excitement to its highest point. A woman brought clean linen cloths to embalm the bodies, which were carried in procession to the Bethlehem Chapel, where, with the assistance of Huss, they were solemnly interred. Henceforth the three young men were looked upon by the Hussites as martyrs, and Bethlehem Chapel

was mockingly dubbed by their adversaries as the "Chapel of the Three Saints."

The anti-Huss party were driven to desperation by all these things. They sent a message to Pope John XXIII, calling his attention to the fact that for more than two years Huss had been under the ban of the Church; that he had continued to teach the doctrines of Wyclif, and that now he was opposing bitterly the preaching of the crusades against Ladislaus and the sale of indulgences, his writings on this subject having been scattered far and wide over Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, and Poland. This message was communicated to Pope John through the agent of the Prague clergy at Rome, Michael of Deutschbrod, better known under the name of De Causis. He was destined to be one of the chief instruments of the condemnation and execution of Huss at the Council of Constance.

The pope at once saw the seriousness of the situation, and commissioned Cardinal Peter St. Angelo to proceed against Huss with the utmost severity. He further ordered the ban of excommunication to be proclaimed in all the churches of Prague, and in case Huss should still remain obstinate, within twenty days, on Sundays and holidays, in all the churches, amid the ringing of bells and extinguishing of candles, the curse of the Church should be laid upon him. No faithful member of the Church, under penalty of excommunication, should have anything to do with him,

should give him food or drink or shelter; wherever he should appear, divine service should cease at once; and if he should die no one should give him Christian burial. Other decrees ordered the faithful to seize the person of Huss and to deliver him up to the Archbishop of Prague or the Bishop Leitomisl, and to see to it that Bethlehem Chapel should be razed to the ground.

This seemed to produce an effect at last. The magistrates of the Old City, for the most part Germans and enemies of Huss, authorized a great crowd of men to proceed to Bethlehem Chapel, where Huss was preaching, for the purpose of driving out the congregation, taking Huss himself prisoner, and destroying the chapel. But they met with such a firm resistance on the part of Huss's friends, that they were forced to depart again with their object unaccomplished.

Yet while on the one hand the interdict only served to strengthen the loyalty of Huss's friends, on the other hand it was a crisis in which the weak and cowardly were to be separated from the brave and true. A number of those, who had been on Huss's side in the whole question of Wyclifism, now became frightened, and left him. Among them were Stanislaus of Znaim, Peter of Znaim, and Stephen Paletz. Indeed, it was to these men that Huss chiefly owed his training in philosophy; as the popular genealogy had put it, "Stanislaus begat Peter, Peter begat Paletz, and Paletz begat Huss."

All these men became his bitterest enemies, especially Stephen Paletz, who with Michael de Causis led the hostile party at Constance, and left no stone unturned to bring about the condemnation of his former friend. Of Paletz, Huss writes in 1413: "He was once my closest friend and companion; now he has become my most hateful opponent." There is a certain pathos in this breaking up of a friendship of many years standing; on the side of Paletz the motive was fear; on the side of Huss it was love of truth. Paletz, completely reversing his former attitude in regard to Wyclif, now preached a sermon in which he called him a dangerous heretic; whereupon, writes Huss in 1413, "I said to him, and I have not spoken to him since, 'My friend is Paletz, and my friend is likewise the truth; between these two duty bids me to prefer the truth.'"

On the other hand, Huss was cheered by the loyalty of many distinguished men, among them Jerome of Prague, destined to follow him to the stake at Constance; Jacob of Mies, or Jacobel as he was called, who was the leader of the discussions on the administration of the communion in two kinds to the laity, thus giving rise later to the party of the Calixtines; and John of Jessinic, who became the head of the reformatory movement after the death of Huss.

In the meantime, however, the interdict over the city of Prague, because of the presence of

Huss, remained in force. No services were held, no baptisms or marriages could be celebrated, nor could the dead be buried according to the rites of Holy Church. The seriousness of this state of affairs led the king to request Huss voluntarily to leave the city. This he did December, 1412, not without many misgivings as to what was his real duty, whether to go or to stay.

CHAPTER V.

HUSS IN EXILE.

The first important step taken by Huss after he had left Prague was his appeal from the pope to Jesus Christ, which he read himself from the pulpit in Prague, whither he returned temporarily for that purpose. This appeal created a tremendous excitement, both among his friends and enemies, the latter being filled with rage at what they called his blasphemy.

At the same time, however, strenuous efforts were still kept up to bring about a compromise in the struggle which threatened to disrupt the whole country. On January 3, 1413, a new Synod was held, in which was discussed the question, "How to restore peace to Bohemia." It was a foregone conclusion, however, that all these discussions were destined to come to naught. On the one hand the king had no desire to carry out the pope's commands, and on the other there was an irreconcilable difference between Huss's views of the Bible and the real Church of Christ, and the unyielding claim of supreme power over all men's consciences made by the Roman hierarchy. At last the king appointed a commission to go over the whole question.

The members of the commission began their work. They summoned the leading men of both parties, Stanislaus of Znaim, Peter of Znaim, and Paletz on the one side, and John of Jessinic and Jacob of Mies on the other. Huss being practically exiled from Prague, of course could not appear. Both sides promised to obey the decision of the commission. But once more irreconcilable differences stood in the way. King Wenzel became more and more impatient, and finally when Paletz and Znaim refused to attend the meetings any further, on the ground that the proceedings were not impartial, he lost control of his temper, and in order to punish them for their obstinacy and disobedience he banished them from his kingdom.

This action was successful in one sense. Stanislaus and Peter of Znaim went to Moravia, and from this time on disappear from the story of Huss's life. Stephen Paletz went to the Bishop of Leitomisl, whom he later accompanied to the Council of Constance, where he achieved the baleful notoriety of being the protagonist in all the efforts, both open and underhanded, made to destroy his former friend and colleague. Naturally enough, Huss was later accused of being the cause of their banishment, but as a matter of fact neither he nor Jerome were at Prague at the time.

Of the life of Huss during the period of what we might call his exile little detail is known. He first went to Kotzi-hradek, near the town of Austi,

where afterward the famous settlement of Tabor was made, which became the real center of Hussitism in Bohemia, a result due undoubtedly to Huss's presence there now. Later, however, he went to the castle of Krakowec, not far from Prague.

During all this time he was busy in two ways; first, in preaching; and secondly, in writing. His extraordinary power of moving the people by sermons at once clear and full of fervid devotion was manifested now by the immense crowds who flocked from all directions to hear him. It was during this time that he laid among the peasants the basis of that vast organization which afterwards became such a tremendous instrument in the hands of Ziska and the two Procopiuses.

In the second place, he occupied the enforced leisure of his exile in composing those books in which he summed up the main points of his teachings. Perhaps no literary work of his was more important than his revision of an old translation of the Bible in the Bohemian language made by an unknown writer of the fourteenth century. In this way he, like Luther later, not only made the Holy Scriptures accessible to the common people, but influenced strongly the development of his native tongue. Says Palacky: "As a writer in Bohemian he stood up for purity, and not only sought to regulate the language by means of firm rules, but he invented a new system of orthography which recommended itself so much by means of its simplicity,

precision, and consistency, that in the sixteenth century it was adopted by printers, and since then has been followed down to the present day."

He especially devoted himself during this time, however, to putting down in permanent form his reformatory ideas. It was the spread of his writings, largely composed at this time, that made his influence grow more and more powerful throughout the land. This was especially true of his treatise on the Church.

Before following him to Constance, then, it will be well to try to obtain as clear an idea as possible of his doctrines, especially in so far as they differ from those of the Church at that time. We shall thus be able better to understand the accusations made against him, and to appreciate the angry passions which made his trial a mockery and his condemnation a foregone conclusion.

It is not the place here to go into detail as to Huss's whole creed. He was in harmony with the Church in many points which Protestantism has since abolished. Thus he believed devoutly in the Virgin Mary, in the worship of saints, and in the seven sacraments. A great deal of discussion has been made as to his attitude toward the doctrine of transubstantiation. This was one of the principal points urged against him at Constance. Yet when we carefully go over his writings, we can not find any proof that he differed in this question from the established doctrine of the Church.

While he followed Wyclif in many respects, he did not follow him here. It is a significant fact that he was not accused of this form of heresy during the early years of his reformatory activity; not indeed before 1412, when Michael de Causis in his complaint to Pope John XXIII declared that Huss had said from his pulpit in the Bethlehem Chapel that after the consecration of the wafer on the altar nothing but the natural bread remained. Huss, however, vigorously protested against this statement, and in his third and last hearing before the Council, when they wished him to sign a recantation, begged them for God's sake not to force him to lie, in regard to a heresy "of which I know nothing, and concerning which witnesses have declared things which it never entered my head to say, especially that after consecration the bread still remained."

The essential significance of Huss's teaching, that which makes him the true forerunner of Luther and Protestantism, and that which led to his condemnation and death, consists in his attitude toward two important doctrines, which he consistently taught from first to last,—the ultimate authority of Holy Scripture, and the real constitution of the Church of Christ. In these two points he was diametrically opposed to the clergy and the Roman hierarchy. If he was right, then their power was based on false premises and threatened with ultimate destruction. All

the patient building of the structure of ecclesiastical authority, with its marvelous system of hierarchical gradation from the lowest priest to the supreme pontiff, must crumble and fall to pieces. It was no mere academic thesis which was fought out at Constance, but the question of the very existence of the Roman Church.

Although Huss did not dream of the logical conclusion of his teachings, yet they were in spirit the same as that held to-day by the great majority of Protestant Churches. What a vast difference there was between this view of the Church and that of the hierarchical system in the fifteenth century, it is not necessary here to dwell upon. In place of the simple organization of the apostolic community, a vast system based on that of the Roman Empire had grown up. God had deputed all His power on earth, both temporal and spiritual, to the pope as His own vice-regent. Not to believe in this was a mortal sin. God was afar off, and could only be approached by man through the mediation of priests. The Church itself consisted in the whole body of the baptized. Whoever did not belong to the visible Church, was excluded from the mercy and grace of God; outside the Church no salvation. On the other hand, those who conformed outwardly to the services, who attended the sacraments and humbly obeyed the ecclesiastical authorities were considered to be members in good and regular standing of the Holy

Church. All this, of course, as every one knows, was based on the words of Christ to Peter (Matthew xvi, 17-19): "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Against this whole ecclesiastical system Huss raised his voice. He declared that the Church consisted of the whole body of the elect; that it is built alone on Christ, who is its sole head. Stephen Paletz and Stanislaus of Znaim had declared in their discussion with him—what was held universally at that time—that the pope as the successor of Peter was the head, and the cardinals as the successors of the apostles were the body of the Church.

In reply to this, Huss denied that in the words of Christ quoted above He had meant any such thing; that neither Peter nor any other apostle had claimed such authority; that as one can easily see from the Acts of the Apostles, the primitive Church was not a government of one man, but of all alike. The whole system of the papacy was false, based on the (alleged) gift of Constantine. He shows how many popes had been heretics and men of corrupt life; nay, one had been a woman in disguise. But not only did he repudiate the papacy,

but the whole system of the clergy, scourging them for their luxury, avarice, envy, and bitter quarrels.

By his destructive criticism of these and many other features of Romanism, he practically destroys the whole mediæval Church. He would have it fundamentally reorganized. Every nation should have its own Church, independent of outside authority. The various members of it should be equal, laity as well as clergy. The temporal princes should defend the law of Christ and protect His servants; the clergy should attend strictly to their function of preaching and administering the sacraments, and should, by giving the example of a holy life, endeavor to draw all men to Christ. The laity should obey their natural lords, and both princes and people should be obedient to the clergy in spiritual things, yet not unconditionally even here.

In all these things we see that Huss was in harmony with Luther. Yet he was not a Protestant in the full sense of the word. He did not get beyond the Pelagianism of the mediæval Church. In all his utterances concerning grace, faith, and works he resembled far more St. Thomas Aquinas than he did the famous doctrine of Luther, "The just shall live by faith."

It is easy to conceive what bitterness such bold declarations concerning the Church must have produced among the members of the hierarchy. It

was useless, nay, it was foolhardiness, for him to go to the Council, for as it was a question of life and death for the papacy there could be no possible compromise. There could not be the slightest doubt that unless Huss retracted he would be condemned. His friends tried to keep him from going; he himself had a presentiment that he would never return. A calm deliberation of the circumstances could have pointed to no other conclusion. It was the "underthirst" for martyrdom, which Palacky mentions as one of his characteristics, which alone could have caused him to go to Constance, where an inevitable death awaited him.

In his conception, then, of the Church, Huss was in full agreement with the later movement of Protestantism. Still more is this true in regard to his views concerning the Holy Scriptures. We have seen that when he had first been appointed preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel he had been led to a profound study of the Bible, as a necessary means of preparation for his sermons. We have also seen that during his exile he spent part of his time in revising and preparing for the public a Bohemian translation of the Scriptures.

Yet in his public declarations concerning the Bible as the only ultimate authority in all questions of faith and conduct, Huss followed closely Wyclif, especially the latter's treatise on the "Truth of the Holy Scripture." The arguments he found there

he took over, enlarged and carried out to the logical conclusion. Every Christian is bound to believe all the truth, direct or indirect, which the Holy Ghost has laid down in the Bible. The claims of the Doctors of the Church and the Bulls of the pope are only to be attended to so far as they are based on the Scriptures. The same thing is true concerning the authority of the Synods, Councils, and the teachings of the Church Fathers. These Huss does not deny, except in such cases where they do not harmonize with the Bible. This alone is the source of Christian truth. Over and over again he emphasizes this doctrine; it is the keynote in all his writings. And while it is true that it was his arraignment of the papacy and hierarchy which chiefly led his enemies to procure his death, it was the unshakable belief in the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate rule of faith that made him immovable in the face of hatred, abuse, and even death at the stake. He died a martyr's death because he would not give up his belief in the Bible.

It was this firm and serene confidence in the power of truth that makes the name of Huss so glorious in the annals of the Church. As a thinker he was not to be compared with Wyclif; as a keen disputant and eloquent orator he was inferior to his younger contemporary, Jerome of Prague; and he by no means had the administrative ability and indomitable energy that enabled Luther to carry out his mighty work.

His character was rather gentle than strong, and he was better fitted to be the spiritual director of his people than the leader of a bitter controversy marked by the clangor of angry tongues. In a memorial sermon preached in Bethlehem Chapel after the death of Huss, an unknown preacher said: "God gave him a practiced tongue, so that he knew when he should speak; he had love and compassion for all men, even his enemies and persecutors. He was moral and blameless and devout, free from envy, avarice, and flattery." But with all these attributes of a quiet and loving disposition, Huss possessed a deep love for truth and an unshakable faith in the power of God, which made him stand undismayed in the face of death,

"Sotto l'osbergo di sentirsi puro." *

* "Under the breast-plate of a clear conscience."—Dante, Inferno, XXVIII, 117.

CHAPTER VI.

HUSS GOES TO CONSTANCE.

We have now come to the parting of the ways in the life of John Huss. The long period of contest, of vain efforts at compromise, had reached its climax. The influence of Huss had spread over the whole extent of Bohemia, and his heretical doctrines filled the members of the Roman Church with the bitterest hatred throughout all Christendom. A general feeling existed that something must be done to prevent the further spread of the mischief. One thing alone was left to do, and that was to submit the whole question to the decision of an Œcumenical Council. Huss himself, who was far from realizing the profound revolution and the irreconcilable differences involved in his doctrines, was eager to present his case before a General Council of the Church, instead of, as heretofore, being confined to the authority of individuals, such as the Archbishop of Prague and the pope. It is difficult for us to see how he could hope for any favorable decision from such a Council; but it is beyond doubt that he desired to submit his case to it.

The need of a General Council had been felt

already for many years on other accounts. The discussion of Huss's doctrines had only lately become prominent, and it was more of an incidental than fundamental motive for calling such a Council. There were several other matters which imperatively demanded a settlement, chief among them being the healing of the great schism, which had now become an intolerable scandal.

Of almost equal importance was the question of reforming the corruptions which existed in the Church. Morality among the clergy had reached its lowest ebb. The pictures drawn by Huss in his eloquent denunciations of their avarice, pride, and licentiousness were not a whit stronger than those painted by some of those who were later to become the chief instruments of his death. This was especially true of the great Gerson of the University of Paris and the French Cardinal D'Ailly. One of the avowed motives for calling the Council of Pisa in 1409 had been for the purpose of cleaning the Augean stables of Church morality; but immediately after the election of Alexander V he had dissolved the Council without carrying out the promises he had made before his election. And so this deplorable state of immorality and greed went on until the Council of Constance was decided upon.

All these things and others of minor interest were of long standing; the heresy of Bohemia, however, was only taken into consideration a short time before the convening of the Council. Up to

1412 it had been largely a matter of local interest; after that it became almost equal in importance with the healing of the schism and the corruption of the Church.

The one man who was largely responsible for the calling of the Council was the brother of King Wenzel, Sigismund, who was titular king of Rome and emperor-elect of the Holy Roman Empire. It was he who, now fired with ambition to become emperor in the real sense of the word, desired to restore order and tranquillity throughout Europe. Religious questions were intimately connected with political ones, and he believed that the prestige and influence accruing to him for having rendered possible the healing of the deep disorders in the Church by means of a successful Council would be of inestimable value.

Pope John XXIII was then in Bologna, surrounded by many bitter enemies, threatened by Ladislaus, and rendered an object of contempt and disgust by reason of a life full of infamous vice. He had no liking or desire for a Council, which he foresaw only too well must end in disaster to himself. But he was forced to consent to it by Sigismund; and although, since it must take place, he preferred to have it in some place under his own jurisdiction, he was likewise forced to yield on this point, and to call the Council for Constance within the territory of the Empire.

The Council opened in November, 1414, and

was one of the most numerously attended the world had ever seen. The beautiful city of Constance is situated on the lake of the same name, and formed a fair background to the brilliant picture presented by the magnificently dressed princes of the Church and State, who crowded its narrow streets. It is said that as many as fifty thousand visitors were constantly in attendance, and that the numbers arose at times to one hundred thousand. There were forty-five public and general sessions in all, from November 16, 1414, to April 22, 1418. Among its results, beside the condemnation and death of Huss and Jerome, was the deposition of John XXIII, the preparation for a real reformation of corruption by the revelation of the true condition of the clergy, and last and most important of all, perhaps, the establishment of the doctrine that the authority of the Council is above that of the pope. In this brief biography all these things must be passed over with mere mention.

As we have already said, Huss himself had appealed to a General Council. He was now invited by Sigismund to attend, under promise of a letter of safe-conduct. His friends, who knew the implacability of his enemies and the unreliability of the emperor, warned him of his danger. Although he did not allow himself to be dissuaded from his intention, yet the fears of his friends induced him to take certain precautions before starting. He returned to Prague in order to state his beliefs

before the Provincial Council which had been called by the archbishop, and on the day before it opened he nailed to the church doors notices in Latin, German, and Bohemian, stating that he was ready to appear before the assembly and give an account of his faith, and inviting all those who had any accusation to make against him to appear and bring forward their proofs.

He was not permitted to appear before the Provincial Council, however; but he did receive an important document from the papal inquisitor in Bohemia, Nicholas of Nazareth, in which the latter declares that he had conversed with Huss a number of times, had often heard him preach, discussed several points of Holy Writ with him, but never had he found an error or heresy in him, but rather had found him in all his words and works to be a true and orthodox Christian. Huss likewise received the testimony of Archbishop Conrad, publicly given to certain noblemen, who sent it to the emperor in a letter, to the effect that he knew of no error or heresy in Huss.

Strong in his own conscience and fortified by the above-mentioned testimonies as to his orthodoxy, Huss now was eager to go to Constance. On September 1, 1414, he wrote to Sigismund, declaring his willingness to appear before the Council, and requested a safe-conduct from the king, in order that he might proclaim his faith in public, adding the prophetic words: "Nec spero verebar

confiteri Christum dominum, et pro ejus lege verissima, si oportuerit, mortem pati."*

He had already before this declared his willingness to die for his faith in a letter to the rector of the University of Prague. It is worth while to quote somewhat at length from this letter, as it shows us the attitude of mind with which Huss looked forward to the contest between himself and his adversaries at Constance. "Venerable Rector, I have received a great consolation from your letter, in which you write among other things, 'The just shall not be cast down, whatever may happen to him.' I receive with gratitude this consolation. I cling to the words of Holy Writ, and say to myself, that if I am just no evil whatsoever can so trouble me as to turn me away from the path of truth. If I live devoutly in Christ, I must suffer persecution in the name of Christ, for if it was necessary for Him to suffer in order to enter into glory, we too must bear our cross and imitate Him in His passion. I declare then, venerable Rector, that I have never been crushed by persecution, that I am cast down only by my own sins and the errors of the Christian people. What are for me the riches of the world? What affliction can the loss of them cause to me? What care I for the loss of the favor of man? What is infamy to me, which when suffered in a humble spirit tries,

* Nor I hope, shall I be afraid to confess the Lord Christ, and, if necessary, to die for his most indubitable law.

purifies, and glorifies the children of God, so that they shine and radiate like the sun in the kingdom of their Father? What care I for death? If they tear me away from this wretched life, I know that he who loses life here will triumph over death and find true life hereafter. But some men blinded by luxury, vainglory, ambition, do not understand these things; others are turned away from the truth by fear, and linger on without patience or charity or virtue, in a strange perplexity. On one side they are urged by the knowledge of the truth; on the other by the fear of exposing their miserable body to death. As for me, I will expose my body to death (I hope with the aid of the Lord Jesus), if His mercy come to my aid. For I do not desire to live in this corrupt world, unless I can lead to repentance both myself and others according to the will of God."

In the meantime his enemies were busy making preparation for their campaign of persecution. They had gathered together all the accusations already made against him, and had formulated them, together with new material. All those who had ever heard Huss preach, or had any cause to bear witness against him, were invited to make deposition under oath. To pay the necessary expenses a collection was taken up among the clergy of Bohemia hostile to Huss. The amount thus gathered was forwarded to the Bishop of Leitomisl, John the Iron as he was called, who himself was

about to start for Constance, accompanied, among others, by Stephen Paletz, Huss's former friend, and now his most bitter enemy and unrelenting persecutor.

The accusations which had been drawn up against Huss were of two kinds: those extracted from his own writings, and those taken down by notaries from witnesses who declared they had heard him make certain heretical statements from the pulpit. Through a friend, Huss, while still at Castle Krakowec, received an abstract of the documents containing these accusations on the part of witnesses, and spent the remaining time before his departure in going over and answering them.

Most of these statements he declared to be false, such as that he had declared from the pulpit that after the Eucharist bread only remained (*i. e.*, that he denied the doctrine of transubstantiation); that he had declared the efficacy of the sacrament to be neutralized when administered by a corrupt or wicked priest. He acknowledged, however, the truth of the statements made by certain witnesses, to the effect that he had declared that "no one could be excommunicated, especially for money, except those whom God Himself had excommunicated." Nor did he deny having said that the Church could get along without a pope, and that he wished his soul might be where Wyclif was. To Protyna's declaration that he had denied the existence of the Church, Huss said No! but that he understood,

as Augustine, Jerome, and others had done, the Church to be composed of all those who maintained that faith in Christ which had been taught by Peter and Paul at Rome. To Michael de Causis, who declared that Huss had held all papal and episcopal indulgences to be worthless, and had declared that the pope was Antichrist and the Roman Church was a synonym for Satan, Huss answered that all these things thus stated were false. What he had said was that indulgences sold for money are not founded on the Scriptures; that the pope was Antichrist only when he sold the offices of the Church for money (*i. e.,* was guilty of simony), was proud, avaricious, and lived a life unworthy of a follower of Christ. A good pope was not Antichrist.

The time had now come for Huss to leave for Constance. On the day before his departure, October 9, 1414, he wrote a noble letter of farewell to his Bohemian friends, which deserves to be quoted here in its entirety:

"I, John Huss, a priest and minister of Jesus Christ to all our beloved and faithful brothers and sisters, who have heard from my mouth the divine word and have received the mercy and peace of God and the Holy Spirit: May they continue to walk without spot or blemish in the way of truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord! You know, dear brethren, that for a long time I have instructed you in the faith, teaching you the Word of God,

and not things foreign to the truth. For I have always sought, seek still, and shall seek even unto the end, only your salvation. I had resolved before departing for Constance to refute all false accusations and to confound those lying witnesses who wish to lead me to destruction; but time has not allowed this, and I shall do it later. You, then, who know these things, do not think, do not suppose that I shall meet unworthy treatment for any false doctrine. Abide in the truth, trusting in the mercy of God, who has given you to know and defend the truth through me, his faithful preacher; and beware of false teachers.

"As for me, armed with a safe-conduct from the emperor, I am about to go forth to meet my numerous and mortal enemies. These my enemies in the Council, more numerous than were those of Christ, are among the bishops and doctors, and also among the princes of this world and the Pharisees. But I trust in Almighty God and in my Savior; and I hope He will hear my ardent prayers, that He will place prudence and wisdom in my mouth, to the end that I may resist them; and that He will grant me His Holy Spirit to fortify me in His truth; so that the gates of hell may not turn me from it, and that I may confront with an intrepid heart temptation, prison, and the sufferings of a cruel death. Christ suffered for His beloved; should we wonder then that He has left us His example, in order that we endure patiently ourselves

all things for our own salvation. He is God and we are His creatures; He is the Lord and we are His servants; He is the master of the world and we are insignificant mortals; He has need of nothing, we are destitute of all; He has suffered, why should we not suffer likewise, especially when suffering is for us a purification? Verily he can not perish who has confidence in Christ and who abides in His truth. Therefore, my beloved, pray to Him earnestly to grant me His Spirit, that I may abide in His truth, and that He may deliver me from all evil; and if my death is to contribute to His glory, pray that it may come quickly, and that He may grant unto me to bear all my ills with constancy. But if it is better, in the interest of my salvation, that I return among you, we will ask of God that I may return from this Council without blemish; that is, that I may take away naught from the truth of the Gospel of Christ, in order that we may recognize more purely His light and leave unto our brethren a fair example to follow. It may be you will never see my face again in Prague; but if the will of Almighty God should restore me to you, let us then move forward with a better heart in the knowledge and love of His law. The Lord is just and merciful, and He giveth peace to His own in this world and after death. May He watch over you, He who has purified us, His sheep, by the shedding of His own precious blood, which is the everlasting pledge

of our salvation! May He grant unto you to accomplish His will, and when you shall have accomplished it, may He give you peace and eternal joy through Jesus Christ, together with all those who shall have remained in the truth!"*

The day after he wrote this letter he started on his journey to Constance, in spite of the fact that the promised safe-conduct from the emperor had not come. This he did because he was anxious to be on hand when the Council should open. His state of mind was a mixed one. On the one hand trusting in the protection of the emperor and his own good cause he hoped to return in safety. On the other hand that he felt the seriousness of his situation can be seen from the letter quoted above, as well as from another letter which he wrote before leaving Bohemia to a certain Master Martin, requesting him, however, not to open it until he was assured of his death. The letter ends with these words: "Invoke the mercy of God for me, in order that He may deign to direct my life, and after the victory over the perverse powers of this world, over the flesh, the world and the devil, He may open unto me the celestial country in the last day. Farewell, then, in Jesus Christ, together with all those who obey His law. If you wish, you may keep my gray robe as a souvenir; yet if you

* This letter was written in Bohemian, and a number of Latin versions have been made. That given by Palacky in his *Documenta* differs considerably from Bonnechose's French version, from which the above translation has been made.

do not like the gray color, dispose of it as seems best to you. Give also to my pupil, George, sixty pieces of silver or my gray robe, because he has served me well."

The parting from his friends was very painful. All were oppressed by a feeling that they should never see their beloved pastor again. In a letter written in his prison at Constance he tells how on this occasion a certain shoemaker, named Andrew Polonus, said to him: "May God be with you! I can hardly hope that you will return safe and sound, my dear Master John, you who cling so strongly to the truth. May the King, not of Hungary, but of Heaven, cover you with all His blessings, because of the true and excellent doctrines I have learned of you!"

He did not have to travel alone, however, for the two kings, Wenzel and Sigismund, gave him an escort consisting of three noblemen, who were to watch over his personal safety, both on his journey and during his sojourn in Constance. The most distinguished among them was John of Chlum, and with him were Wenzel of Duba and Heinrich of Chlum, surnamed Latzenbock. The two former proved themselves to be men of courage and honor during the painful scenes that were soon to occur at Constance. Latzenbock, however, publicly repudiated Huss's doctrines and approved his condemnation. On October 11, then, Huss set out in company with Wenzel of Duba, John of Chlum,

and certain other Bohemians, among them Peter of Mladenowic, to whom we owe the detailed story of Huss's life while in Constance. Latzenbock met them later.

Huss was greatly pleased with his reception in the various towns and cities through which he passed. Everywhere he nailed up to the doors of the churches proclamations in Latin and German, stating that "Master John Huss is now on his way to Constance, in order there to bear witness to the faith which he has hitherto confessed, confesses now, and ever shall confess, so God will, until his death. If any man has any error or heresy to accuse him of, let him go to the Council, for there is Master John Huss ready to give satisfaction to every adversary."

In a letter written from Nuremberg we have a vivid picture of the scenes through which he passed on his journey. On approaching Pernau he says: "The priest was waiting for me with his curates. When I entered he drank to my health in a large cup of wine. He and his friends listened to my teaching with a spirit of charity, and he said he had always been my friend. All the Germans saw me afterwards with pleasure in the new city. We went from there to Weyden, where we saw a great crowd, filled as it were with admiration, and when we had come to Saltzbach I said to the consuls and the elders of the city: 'I am that John Huss of whom you have doubtless heard much

evil. Here I am. Satisfy yourself concerning the truth by asking me what questions you will.' After many questions they received gladly all that I said to them. . . . We came next to Nuremberg, where certain merchants who had preceded us had published my arrival. Wherefore the people remained in the public squares, looking and asking who was John Huss. Before dinner the priest, John Heluvel, wrote me that he wished to have a long conversation with me. I invited him to come, and he came. Then the citizens and the Masters gathered together, desiring to see and to confer with me. Rising straightway from the table I went to meet them, and as the Masters wished to confer with me, I said to them: 'I speak in public, let those who wish to hear me listen;' and from this time until night we discussed in presence of the consuls and citizens. All the citizens and the Masters remained satisfied. 'Master,' said they, 'all that we have just heard is Catholic. We have taught these things many years; we have held them for true, and shall hold them so still. Surely you will return from this Council with honor.'"

Cheered by all these evidences of good-will toward him, and by the kind and noble friendship of Chlum and Duba, whom he calls "the heralds and advocates of truth," Huss went on his way to Constance, where he arrived on November 3, 1414, after a journey of twenty days. Pope John XXIII had arrived six days before. The emperor was not to arrive before December 25th.

CHAPTER VII.

IMPRISONMENT, TRIAL AND DEATH OF HUSS.

With the arrival of Huss at Constance the last act of the drama of his life began. He took lodgings in the house of a poor widow, situated on the public square near the palace of the pope. His arrival was the signal of renewed activity on the part of both friends and enemies. John of Chlum and Henry of Latzenbock went the next day to the pope to announce the arrival of their protégé, declaring that he was furnished with a safe-conduct from the emperor, and requesting the pope to see that this safe-conduct should not be violated. In the words of Von der Hardt, the messengers of Huss were received courteously, and are said to have brought back the answer from the pope: "Even if John Huss had slain his own brother, he would not allow him to be injured in any way, as far as he was able to prevent it, as long as he remained in Constance."

Thus matters seemed to begin auspiciously for the Bohemian reformer. This assurance of friendliness on the part of the pope was supplemented the next day by the arrival of Wenzel of

Duba, who brought back the famous safe-conduct promised by the Emperor Sigismund to Huss; the latter, however, having come, as we have seen, to Constance before having received it. A bitter controversy has arisen over the whole subject of this safe-conduct, which, as we shall see later, did not save its holder. On the one hand, the friends of Huss have looked on Sigismund's betrayal of his own written word as a contemptible act of weakness and treachery. On the other hand, the defenders of the Church declare that the emperor could not do otherwise. Gebhard Dacher, an eyewitness of the Council, sums up this side of the argument in these words: "Sigismund was persuaded," said he, "after a great many words, that by virtue of the decretals, he was dispensed from keeping his faith with a man accused of heresy." It was further said that the emperor had no authority to grant the safe-conduct without the consent of the Council, especially in matters of faith, and that the emperor acquiesced in this decision, like a good son of the Church.

The Council itself later passed two decrees, in order to justify the action of the emperor before the world. How successful they were in this may be gathered from an anecdote told of Charles V, who, when urged to violate his safe-conduct to Luther at the Diet of Worms, replied: "I do not wish to blush as Sigismund did," alluding to the tradition that in Huss's last appearance before the

Council he declared that he had come of his own accord to the Council, under the public faith of the emperor here present. "When he pronounced these words he looked earnestly at Sigismund, who could not help blushing." It is certain that posterity will always agree with Lenfant, "That John Huss was a victim not only to the passion of his enemies, but also to the weakness and superstition, not to say treachery, of the emperor."

For several days Huss lived quiet and unmolested in his lodgings, free enough in many respects, but forbidden to attend the public mass, because of his ecclesiastical status. In the meantime his enemies were actively at work poisoning the minds of all against him. De Causis and Paletz were especially active, causing placards to be posted everywhere denouncing Huss as an excommunicated heretic, and distributing garbled extracts from his books to the pope and the cardinals. When Huss complained of this to the pope, the latter said: "What can I do? They who have done it are your own countrymen."

The machinations of his enemies soon bore fruit. Huss, although he abstained from being present at public mass, performed the sacrament privately in his own lodgings, to which a large number of people came. When ordered by the Bishop of Constance to desist, he is said to have refused in no gentle terms. Whether this is true or not, De Causis and Paletz finally prevailed upon the cardinals

to arrest him. This was not done openly, but in an underhanded way. A deputation was sent to him to summon him to appear before the cardinals, there to give an account of his doctrines. They had taken the precaution to station a number of armed soldiers in the neighborhood to prevent any disturbance. Huss replied to this summons that he had not come to Constance to speak to the cardinals, but to appear before the entire Council, and to answer all questions that might be asked. Yet nevertheless he declared himself ready to go to the cardinals, and if he were there questioned concerning his faith, he would rather prefer to die than to deny the truth he had learned from the gospel.

Accompanied then by John of Chlum, he left his lodgings. When he was introduced into the presence of the cardinals, they said to him: "Master John, it is said that you have taught and disseminated many errors in Bohemia, and therefore we have sent for you, wishing to inquire of you if this is true." Whereupon he answered: "Most reverend fathers, be it known unto you that rather than to hold error, I should prefer to die. Behold, I have freely come to the sacred Council, ready, if I have erred, to be corrected." Whereupon the cardinals said, "Verily these are good words;" and they went away each one to his own affairs, leaving Huss under the guard of the armed men.

A short time afterward a monk was sent to him as a spy, under the pretense of a friendly con-

versation; he pretended to be a simple unlearned man, desirous of being instructed in certain questions, especially that of transubstantiation. His object was evidently to get Huss to confess his belief that after the sacrament only bread remained on the altar. As we have already seen, this was not Huss's belief; he bluntly declared so to the priest, whom he began to suspect of not being so ignorant as he pretended to be. When this false monk asked him his opinion as to the human and divine nature of Christ, Huss turned to Chlum and said in Bohemian: "Verily this monk says he is a simple and ignorant man, yet he is not so simple, since he asks questions concerning the deepest subjects," and turning to the monk he said: "Brother, you say you are simple, but I think you are double." It was afterwards found out that the monk was one of the most eminent divines of Italy.

In the meantime Paletz and Michael de Causis and others had, by continual urging, persuaded the cardinals that they ought not to let Huss go free again; and so when evening had come they had sent word to John of Chlum that he could leave when he pleased; but as for Huss, he should remain in the pope's palace. Filled with indignation, Chlum went to the pope and complained bitterly of this action, which not only violated the safe-conduct that Huss had received from the emperor, but likewise was contrary to the oral promise of the pope himself, made a short time before,

that he would protect him. All of no avail, however, for the pope weakly and hypocritically laid the blame on the cardinals and the bishops.

About ten o'clock that night Huss was removed from the papal palace to the house of the cantor of the cathedral of Constance, where he was kept under guard for eight days. Then he was taken to the Dominican monastery situated on an island in the Rhine. Here he was thrown into a dark dungeon, in the immediate neighborhood of a sewer, where he remained until March 24, 1415. As may be easily understood, his health suffered in this wretched hole, a serious case of fever developed so that his life was despaired of, and Pope John XXIII sent his own physician to attend him.

While all this was going on Huss's enemies went about their nefarious schemes. Michael de Causis prepared a document containing eight articles, which he presented to the pope. These articles contain the gist of the accusations against Huss, and are here given in outline:

It is declared that Huss had publicly taught that the sacrament ought to be administered in two kinds, and that he had taught publicly both in the University and in church, or that at least he holds the opinion, that in the sacrament of the altar the bread remains bread after the consecration.

He is accused of saying that ministers in a state of mortal sin can not administer the sacrament, and that on the contrary any person may do it, provided he is in a state of grace.

He has taught that by the Church ought not to be understood the pope, cardinals, archbishops, and clergy, and that this is a wicked definition invented by the Schoolmen; further, that the Church ought not to possess temporalities, and that the secular lords may take them away from the Churches and ecclesiastics with impunity; that Constantine and the other princes were guilty of an error in endowing the Church; that all priests are of equal authority, and that consequently the ordinations reserved to the pope and bishops are the mere effect of their ambition; that the Church has no longer the power of the keys when the pope, cardinals, bishops, and all the clergy are in a state of mortal sin, which may be the case; finally he, Huss, contemns excommunication, having all along celebrated the divine office during his journey.

After two more articles, along the same line as the preceding, De Causis discusses the conduct of Huss, accusing him among other things of having been the first cause of the secession of the German students and professors from the University of Prague in 1409; of having defended the doctrines of Wyclif against the will of the University, which had condemned them, and of gathering around him heretics and enemies of the Church. "From hence, he inferred that if John Huss be not severely treated by the Council, he will do the Church more harm than ever any heretic did

since the reign of Constantine, and prays that the pope immediately appoint commissioners to examine him, and doctors to read carefully his works."

In the meantime Chlum left nothing undone to secure the release of Huss. He wrote to the emperor, who had not yet come to Constance, complaining of the way in which his safe-conduct had been treated, and the emperor, who had not as yet been persuaded by casuistical remarks to break his word, fell into a rage and ordered that Huss be released. This order was not obeyed, and Chlum in his indignation nailed up to the doors of the churches throughout the city the following manifesto: "I, John of Chlum, make known to all who shall see or hear these presents, that Master John Huss, Bachelor of Divinity, having come to Constance there to give an account of his faith in a public hearing, under the safe-conduct and protection of the most serene prince, Lord Sigismund, king of the Romans and of Hungary, for which he has the king's letters patent, yet notwithstanding this safe-conduct, Master John Huss has been apprehended and is actually detained in a prison of this city. And though the pope and cardinals have been very seriously required by solemn ambassadors from the king to recommit him to my care, they have hitherto refused and still do refuse to do it, to the great contempt of the safe-conduct of the king. Therefore I, John of Chlum, do de-

clare in the king's name that the imprisonment and detaining of Master John Huss is not at all pleasing to the king of the Romans, and that they have taken advantage of his absence to commit an act, which they never would have dared to do if he had been present. When he arrives, every one shall know how he resents this contemptuous treatment of his safe-conduct. Dated at Constance on Christmas eve, 1414."

With the arrival of Sigismund the next morning, however, all these hopes gradually began to die out. Endowed with many and brilliant qualities, filled with ambition to restore once more the glory of the Holy Roman Empire, Sigismund had brought about the calling of the Council, not so much for the good of the Church as for his own ambitions, well knowing that if he succeeded in reforming the corruption of the Church and in putting an end to the schism, his own glory and prestige would be prodigiously enhanced. When he saw that by persisting in protecting Huss he was in danger of dissolving the Council, he basely deserted him and left him in prison.

In Bohemia the news of Huss's imprisonment filled the nobles with rage; but the indignant letters they wrote to the emperor only resulted in having their countryman more closely confined.

The story of the next few months in Huss's life is a monotonous one. To repeat the details given by Von der Hardt, Lenfant, and Peter of

Mladenowic would be out of place in this brief sketch. We can only cast a glance at the epoch-making events that occurred outside his prison, and then look for a moment at Huss himself and his life before the final catastrophe came. The Council met from time to time, and discussed the important items of business which had called them together. Sermons were preached on the corruption of the clergy and the tyranny of the pope, equaling, if not surpassing, in freedom of utterance anything ever said by Wyclif and Huss.

The whole year of 1415 was full of stirring events, and was not to close before the death of Huss. Almost as soon as the emperor arrived, a coolness sprang up between him and the pope; the latter, who saw he could expect nothing good from the Council, now only sought a means of escape, and although a strict watch was kept on the gates, he succeeded in accomplishing his plan, through the help of the Archduke Frederick of Austria. For a moment it looked as if the Council must be dissolved, but the emperor declared that it still was in session. This did more than anything else to strengthen the claim of Gerson and the University of Paris that the authority of the Council was superior to the pope, a doctrine that has distinguished the Gallican Church ever since. A few months after, March 29, 1415, John XXIII was deposed from the papacy.

Another important event was the arrival in

Constance of Jerome of Prague, the faithful friend and disciple of Huss. When the latter was about to leave for the Council, Jerome is said to have exhorted him to be faithful in holding on to what he had so often preached, and declared that if he should hear that Huss were ill-treated at Constance he would follow him thither. Carrying out his promise he arrived there April 24th, but unknown, and for some reason or other left the same day, and went to Überlingen, whence after writing a letter to the emperor asking for a safe-conduct, he started for Bohemia again. He was arrested, however, and brought back in chains to Constance and cast into prison.

In the meantime Huss still remained a prisoner. From the Dominican monastery he had been removed to that of the Franciscans. At the time of the pope's flight his friends hoped to persuade Sigismund to release him, but in vain; for the emperor, now yielding to the unremitting demands of Huss's enemies, turned him over to the care of the Bishop of Constance, and ordered that the trial against him be carried on with the utmost severity. He was treated with still greater cruelty, and was carried in chains in a boat to Castle Gottlieben, a few miles distant from the city of Constance, where he was kept in a high tower, with his feet bound by chains, and at night his hands chained to the wall. Here, fed on wretched food, scarcely able to move on account of his

chains, he remained from March 24th to the beginning of June.

Of the inner life of Huss during all these weary months we catch a glimpse in his letters, written while in prison, to his friends. We see his patience and his gratitude for all the kindness shown him by the prison-keepers; we see how he has lost all bitterness against his persecutors, praying God to forgive even his arch-enemy, Paletz. We see his thoughtfulness in the midst of his own tribulations for the welfare of his friends; his hopes and fears for himself and his confidence in God that justice will prevail, not only in his own case, but in the whole reformatory movement which he had done so much to spread.

In a letter written June 24th to his Bohemian friends, he utters what some have looked upon as a prophecy of Luther and his Reformation: "Would that I might manifest the iniquity I have learned to know, in order that the faithful servants of God may be on their guard against it. But I hope that God will send after me champions stronger than I, who will better lay bare the sin of Antichrist, and who will expose themselves to death for the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will give to you and to me eternal glory." And in another letter, speaking about a dream he had, in which he saw the pictures in Bethlehem Chapel destroyed by his enemies, whereupon many painters had made new ones, he says: "I hope that the

life of Christ, that I painted through His word at Bethlehem in the hearts of men, and that His enemies have tried to destroy by forbidding all preaching in the chapel and wishing to raze it to the ground; I hope, I say, that this same life will be better drawn in the future by preachers more eloquent than I, to the great joy of the people who cling with all their heart to Christ. I shall rejoice myself when I shall awake; that is, when I shall rise again from the dead."

We must now leave all other things and turn our attention to the closing scenes of that drama, the details of which are so touching, and which was to end in the death of Huss. In spite of the fact that he had to come to Constance in order to defend his doctrine before the Council, months had passed by without bringing an opportunity of appearing before his accusers publicly. John XXIII had appointed a commission to examine the charges against him, and after the flight of the pope a new commission had been appointed by the Council. Many visits had been made by members of this commission and others to Huss in prison; they had argued with him over and over again, and although he constantly repeated his desire to defend his case before the Council in public, he did not now refuse to discuss the various accusations made against him. All efforts, however, to make him confess that he had been in error were unavailing. He constantly declared

that then only would he recant if they would show him to be in error on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.

We have seen that the attempt made to obtain Huss's liberty at the time of the pope's flight only resulted in a closer imprisonment. A final effort was made by his friends in Constance on May 13th. A memorial was written and read by Peter of Mladenowic to the Council, protesting against the imprisonment of the Reformer and the slanders of his enemies, and demanding that he be set free, in order that he might regain health and strength, so that he might be in condition to answer his enemies, the lords of Bohemia offering themselves as securities that he should not run away before his case was settled.

Although they did not succeed in securing his release from prison, they did succeed in extorting a promise from the Council and emperor to give him a public hearing. The date was set for the fifth of June. This in itself was joyful news to Huss. The private hearings, which had been many, had turned out entirely unsatisfactory, and were accompanied often by insult and violence. In one of his letters he tells how Michael de Causis was there holding a paper in his hand and stirring up the patriarch of Constantinople to force him to answer his questions. "God has permitted Paletz and him," he cries out, "to rise up against me for my sins. Michael examines all my letters and

writings, and Paletz reports all the conversations we have had together during many years."

It was with a revival of courage and hope that he now learned that he was to be heard before the Council. He was in poor condition to undergo such a trial, being worn out by long imprisonment, suffering many painful diseases, toothache, hemorrhages, gravel, and pains in the head. He was brought to Constance, his prison in Gottlieben now being occupied by John XXIII, who had been caught and brought back to Constance.

On June 5th a great crowd gathered together in the refectory of the Franciscan monastery, where the Council was to sit. It seemed at first as if they were going to condemn him without being heard, but Peter of Mladenowic hastily departed and apprized Chlum and Duba of his suspicions, and they informed the emperor immediately. The latter thereupon sent the Elector Palatine and the Burgrave of Nuremberg to the Council, forbidding them in his name to try Huss without a fair hearing.

The scene that followed was a disgraceful one. It was at once evident that Huss could not obtain a fair hearing before these men, who were animated by the bitterest hatred toward him. "As soon as he came in they put his works into his hands, which he owned and offered to retract if any error was found in them. After this they began with the reading of the articles. But they had

scarce made an end of the first, with the evidence supporting it, when so terrible a noise arose that the Fathers could not hear one another, much less the answers of John Huss. When the clamor was a little over, Huss, offering to defend himself by the authority of the Scriptures and the Fathers, was interrupted as if he had spoken nothing to the purpose, and they set upon him with reproach and banter. If he chose to hold his peace, his silence was looked upon as an approbation, though he declared he was forced to be silent because they would not hear him. In short, everything passed with so much confusion, that for the Council's honor the most judicious of the members advised the putting off of the affair to another day."*

The second hearing took place two days afterward, on June 7th. A certain solemnity was added to it by an almost total eclipse of the sun that had occurred earlier in the day. That this meeting passed over more quietly was due largely to the fact that the emperor was present. Two classes of accusations had been made against Huss—those based on the report of witnesses as to what he had said and done, and which had been written up by De Causis, and those based on extracts from Huss's own writings, probably drawn up by Paletz. Out of these he was accused of having taught thirty-nine different heretical doctrines, most of them being drawn from his book on the Church. The

* Lenfant, History of the Council of Constance.

whole of this session was devoted to the first class of accusations. As we before have seen, Huss had denied already some of these and confessed to others. The old accusations were repeated, that he had denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, had spread Wyclif's doctrines throughout Bohemia, had caused the emigration of the German members of the University, and had disobeyed the Church and caused a great schism among the people of Bohemia, and especially of Prague.

Before he was taken from the Council, the Cardinal of Cambray reproached him in the emperor's presence with having said that if he had not wanted to come to the Council, neither the king nor the emperor could have made him, at which a great murmuring was heard in the assembly. Whereupon John of Chlum boldly exclaimed: "John Huss has asserted nothing but what is true; for though I am one of the meanest lords in Bohemia, I would undertake to defend him for a year against all the forces of the king and emperor. Much more could the other nobles do who are more powerful than I." Then the emperor said to Huss: "We advise you to maintain nothing obstinately, and to submit yourself with all obedience to the authority of the Council in all the articles which have been exhibited and solidly proved against you, which if you do we will take care that for the sake of the king and kingdom of Bohemia you shall retire with the good-will of the Council, after

you have made tolerable penance and satisfaction; but if not, the Council will know how to deal with you. For our part, we shall be so far from supporting you in your errors and obstinacy, that we will with our own hands kindle the fire to burn you, rather than tolerate you further. You will do well, then, to stand to the judgment of the Council."

The next day took place the third and last hearing of Huss, in which were read and discussed the thirty-nine articles purporting to be drawn from his writings. And here, as in the previous hearing, he acknowledged some of the articles as his, but denied those which had been garbled by his enemies, especially Stephen Paletz. When the tenth article was read, in which it was said that the vicar of Christ was only so in truth if he imitated the life of Christ, and the words of Huss's answer were read: "If the pope live after another manner than St. Peter did, if he is covetous, he is the vicar of Judas Iscariot who courted the wages of iniquity, by selling Jesus Christ." While this answer was being read, the fathers of the Council stared at one another and shook their heads with a sneer. Again when a passage was read in which Huss compares those who deliver a heretic to the secular arm before conviction to the high priests and Pharisees, a great murmur arose among the cardinals and bishops, and when he attempted to explain his appeal to Christ, they all burst out laughing at him.

A dramatic incident occurred apropos of the statement that if a pope or bishop or prelate be in deadly sin, he is neither pope nor bishop nor prelate. This Huss had acknowledged, and had quoted in support of his statement the words of Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, and others, adding: "And even a king in deadly sin is not worthily a king before God, according to those words which God said to Saul by the Prophet Samuel, 'Because thou hast rejected My word, I will reject thee from being a king.'" While this article and Huss's answer thereto were being read, the emperor was talking at a window with the Elector Palatine and the Burgrave of Nuremberg, in which conversation they said amongst other things that they never had seen a more pernicious heretic than John Huss. The Cardinal Cambray called the emperor's attention to what Huss had said, and Huss was commanded to repeat the words that had just been read; *i. e.*, that a king in deadly sin is unworthy of God. The only answer the emperor made was, "There is no man living without a fault." But the Cardinal Cambray cried out angrily, "Was it not enough for thee to have abased the clergy, but you must do the same with the king?"

At the end of the session strenuous efforts were made to induce Huss to retract. Cardinal Cambray addressed him as follows: "You see how many heinous crimes you have been accused of. You are now to consider well what you are to do.

The Council has but two things to propose to you, of which you will do well to embrace the first, which is to submit yourself humbly to their sentence and decree, and to undergo, without repining, whatever they shall please to inflict upon you; in which case you will be treated with all the gentleness and humanity possible. If on the contrary you choose the other way, which is to defend any of those articles laid to your charge, and to demand another hearing for that purpose, you shall not indeed be refused a hearing; but consider well that here are a great many persons of weight and knowledge, who have produced such strong arguments against your articles that I much fear while you persist in your defense, your obstinacy will expose you to some fatal consequence. This I say not as your judge, but as your monitor."

Other prelates added their exhortations and entreaties, to all of which Huss replied with a lowly countenance: "Reverend Fathers, I have already said more than once that I came hither of my own free will, not to maintain anything with obstinacy, but to receive instruction, if it should appear that I have been mistaken. I entreat you then that I may be allowed to explain my sentiments more at large, and if I do not support them by certain and solid arguments, then I will readily conform to your instructions, as you desire."

Thereupon the sentence of the Council was read

to him: 1. That he should confess to have erred in holding those articles which had been alleged against him, and ask pardon. 2. That he should promise upon oath never to hold or teach them any more. 3. That he should retract them in public. This Huss firmly declined to do, "for," said he, "to abjure is to renounce an error that hath been held. But as there are many errors laid to my charge which have never entered my head, how can I renounce them by oath?" He refused to accept the casuistical ways of escape from this dilemma suggested by the emperor, or to accept the suggestion made by the Cardinal of Florence of an abjuration "as gentle and equitable as he perhaps would accept." The emperor now at the end of his patience spoke to him as follows: "You are of age, and after what I have now repeated to you, it is at your option to choose the alternative. We can not but give credit to the witnesses against you. Therefore if you are wise, you will submit with a contrite heart to the penance that shall be imposed upon you by the Council; you will renounce your errors because they are manifest, and you will swear to teach and hold them no longer, but on the contrary to oppose them as long as you live; otherwise there are laws according to which the Council will judge you."

Huss was now taken back to prison, tired out in body and mind, but of an unbroken spirit. When he had gone the emperor addressed the Council and

said: "You have heard the articles laid to the charge of John Huss. In my opinion there is not one among them that does not deserve punishment by fire. If therefore he do not retract them all, I am for having him burnt."

Thus ended the last hearing of Huss before the Council. He had had an opportunity of facing his accusers while the long list of accusations was made against him. But in spite of this the whole proceeding was but a mockery of justice. From the first it was a foregone conclusion that one of two things must happen, either he must recant or be condemned. The differences between him and his adversaries were irreconcilable, and no amount of argument could change the fact. On both sides there was an unshaken determination not to yield. In Huss's case it amounted to a heroic courage rarely seen even in the annals of martyrdom. Alone, sick and suffering, weakened by months of close confinement, he never for a moment hesitated or lost his firmness. Quiet, gentle, yet firm as a rock, he withstood all insults, ridicule, and threats.

The same firmness was shown after the Council, when numerous efforts were made to make him recant. Even his bitterest and most unrelenting enemy, Paletz, visited him in prison and urged him to yield, telling him he ought not to fear the shame of a recantation, but only to think of the good which would follow. To which says Huss:

"I answered, 'The disgrace of being condemned and burned is greater than that of recanting sincerely. What shame, then, should I fear in recanting? But tell me, Paletz, what would you do if you were sure that errors were imputed to you wrongly? Would you retract them? That is hard,' said he, and burst into tears."

That the motives that led Huss to hold out against all these entreaties were not those of pride of opinion, or of mere obstinacy, is shown in one of his noblest letters written to his friends. "These are the things that the Council has often demanded of me. But they imply that I renounce and recant, that I accept a penitence, and this I can not do without going against the truth in many things. For I would perjure myself by confessing errors which are falsely attributed to me. Furthermore, I should give an occasion of great scandal to the people of God who have listened to my preaching, and it would be better that a millstone were hanged about my neck and that I should be plunged to the bottom of the sea. Finally, if I should act thus to escape a momentary confusion and brief suffering, I should fall into disgrace and suffering far more terrible, unless I repented before my death. This is why I have thought, in order to strengthen myself, on the seven martyred Maccabees, who preferred to be cut to pieces rather than eat meat prohibited by God. I thought also of the holy Eleazar, who according as it is written did

not even wish to confess that he had eaten forbidden food, for fear of leaving a bad example to posterity, but preferred a martyr's death. Having, then, before my eyes many saints of the new dispensation who have accepted martyrdom, rather than to consent to sin, how shall I who have exhorted others in my sermons to patience and firmness fall into perjury and vile deceits, and offend by my example many children of our Lord? Far be it from me! Far be it from me! Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will reward me plentifully, and will give me in my trials the help of patience."

Owing to the desire of the emperor and others to secure his recantation, the formal condemnation was put off for several weeks. On June 15th the Council declared heretical the doctrine of Jacobel in regard to the use of the Eucharist in two kinds, which had grown important in Bohemia after Huss's departure, and which he had approved in his letters from prison. On June 24th they resolved to burn Huss's books, hoping in this way to bend his stubborn will. But all was in vain, as may be seen from his letter to his friends in Bohemia, exhorting them not to cease reading his writings, nor to give them up to be burnt.

The day before his sentence and death the emperor made one final attempt to persuade him to recant. He sent a distinguished delegation, consisting of four bishops, accompanied by Huss's

faithful friends, Duba and Chlum, to ask him "whether he would abjure those articles which he acknowledged as his, and as to those which he did not own, though they were proved, whether he would swear that he did not hold them, and that he had no other sentiments than those of the Church." To which Huss replied that he stood by the declaration he had made on the first of July. The declaration referred to he had given to another deputation that had visited him on that day, and reads as follows: "Fearing to offend God and to perjure myself, I am not willing to abjure any of the articles that have been exhibited against me by false evidences, and which I call God to witness, were never preached nor defended by me, as they are laid to my charge. As to the articles extracted from my books, I declare that if there is any one of them which carries any errors in it I abhor it, but am not willing to abjure one of them, for fear of offending the truth and the sentiments of the holy doctors. And if it were possible that my voice reach the uttermost parts of the earth as clearly as every lie, and as all my sins shall be made manifest at the last day, I would heartily revoke before the whole world every falsehood or error which I may have said or conceived. This is what I declare, and what I freely and voluntarily write." It was this written declaration to which, as his ultimatum, Huss now referred the last commission who visited him.

On this occasion a noble and touching incident occurred, related as follows by Peter of Mladenowic: "When they were taking Huss out of prison to meet the commissioners, Chlum spoke to him: 'Master John, I am a layman, and can not presume to offer you advice. Therefore if you feel yourself guilty of any one of those things of which you are accused, do not be ashamed to be instructed by them and to recant. But if you do not feel you are guilty, follow your own conscience, nor be guilty of falsehood in the sight of God, but rather stand fast in the truth which you have known, even unto death." And Huss, shedding tears, answered humbly: "Sir John, know this: if I felt that I had written or preached any errors against the law and Holy Mother Church, I would humbly recant, as God is my witness."

We now come to the last sad scene in the drama of Huss's life. On July 6, 1415, the fifteenth session of the Council was held, the chief business of which was the condemnation and sentence of Huss. Every one of note in the city was present, either out of curiosity or to rejoice in the final destruction of a famous and obstinate heretic. The emperor, with all the princes of the empire, was likewise present, lending solemnity to the occasion. A platform in the form of a table of a certain height was erected in the middle of the church, upon which were the priestly garments in which Huss was to be clothed before the ceremony

of his degradation began. He himself was placed on a high stool before the table, in order that all the people might see him. He made a prayer in a loud voice, while at the same time the Bishop of Lodi began his sermon.

The text of the sermon was from St. Paul, "That the body of sin might be destroyed;" and in it the preacher showed among other things how much heresies distract and harm the Church. After the sermon the proceedings against Huss were begun, but not before a decree of the Council was read forbidding all manifestations, either of approval or disapproval, on pain of excommunication and imprisonment, not excepting kings and princes. The first thing read was the condemnation of additional articles by Wyclif, for we must bear in mind that Huss's errors were considered to be fundamentally based on those of Wyclif. After the reading of these articles, some thirty more of Huss's were read. When all these preliminaries were over, the Bishop of Concordia read two sentences, one condemning the books of Huss to be burnt, the other condemning Huss himself to be degraded from his office as priest.

It is worth while recording this latter sentence in the actual words in which it was read: "The sacred Council of Constance, after having called upon the name of Jesus Christ, and having the fear of God before their eyes, does pronounce, decree, and declare that the said John Huss was

and is a real and notorious heretic, who has publicly taught and preached errors and heresies long ago condemned by the Church of God; that he has advanced several things scandalous, offensive to pious ears, rash and seditious, to the great reproach of the divine majesty, to the offense of the whole Church, and to the detriment of the Catholic faith; that he has trampled the keys of the Church and the ecclesiastical censures under foot; and that he has resolutely persisted in scandalizing Christians by his obstinacy in appealing to Jesus Christ, as to a sovereign judge, without employing the ecclesiastical ways and means; and inserting in the said appeal things false, injurious, and scandalous, in contempt of the Apostolic See, the censures and the keys of the Church. Therefore this sacred Synod, for the reasons above mentioned and many others, decrees that John Huss ought to be judged and condemned as a heretic, and does actually judge and condemn him by these presents, and reproves his appeal as injurious, scandalous, and made in derision of the spiritual jurisdiction. But as it is apparent, from all the Synod has seen, heard, and known, that John Huss is stubborn and incorrigible, and that he will not return to the pale of the Holy Mother Church, by abjuring the errors and heresies which he has publicly maintained and preached, the sacred Synod of Constance declares that the said John Huss ought to be deposed and degraded from the

order of priesthood, and the other orders with which he shall happen to be vested, giving it in express charge to the reverend fathers in Christ the Archbishop of Milan, the Bishops of Feltri, Ast, Alexandria, Bangor, and Lavour, to perform the said degradation in the presence of the Synod, according to law."

Huss listened to the reading of this sentence on his knees, and from time to time he tried to protest against the accusations made against him. He was prevented from speaking by those near him. When the reading of the sentence was ended, he called God to witness that he was innocent, and prayed Him to forgive his judges and accusers. This, however, was received with tokens of anger and mockery on the part of the Council. Hereupon followed the ceremony of degradation. He was ordered to put on the priestly robes. This he did, uttering words recording the similar ceremony in the case of Christ. Thus when he put on the robe he said, "They put a white garment on our Lord Jesus Christ when Herod delivered Him to Pilate." Finally, when he was fully dressed they asked him once more to recant; but he, facing the people, denied having any desire to offend or lead astray the faithful by a hypocritical and wicked recantation, protesting at the same time his innocence. Then he was forced to descend from his seat, and the bishops, taking the chalice from his hands, said: "O cursed Judas, who having for-

saken the counsel of peace art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." With similar curses they took from him each of his vestments, and finally cut his hair in such manner as to conceal his tonsure. They then put a paper crown or mitre on his head in the form of a pyramid, about eighteen inches in height, on which were painted grotesque figures of devils, and the word "Heresiarcha"—arch-heretic—and in this condition they devoted his soul to the devils in hell.

Unshaken even by this solemn anathema, Huss commended his soul to God, and said aloud that he was glad to wear this crown of infamy, for the love of Him who had worn one of thorns. After all this he was handed over to the secular arm. The emperor gave him in charge of the Elector Palatine, who delivered him to the magistrates of Constance. They in their turn ordered the public executioner to burn him, with all his clothes and everything he had on his person, even to his girdle, knife, and purse, with every penny in it.

Surrounded by the city constabulary, followed by armed men and an innumerable multitude of people, he was led through the streets of the city to the place of execution, passing on the way thither the episcopal palace, where his books were being burnt. As he approached the place of execution he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me; into Thy hands, O God,

I commend my spirit." Whereupon some of the people said aloud, "What this man hath done before we know not, but now we hear him put up excellent prayers to God." As he was about to address the people he was interrupted by the Elector Palatine, who ordered the executioners to proceed to do their duty. As he raised his eyes toward heaven his paper mitre fell off, at which he smiled; but the soldiers put it on his head again, saying it must be burnt with the devils whom he served.

As they tied him to the stake his face was turned toward the east, but since it was not proper for a heretic to die looking in that direction they turned him round toward the west. As the wood was being piled up about him, the Elector Palatine made a final appeal to him to recant, only to receive the sublime answer: "God is my witness that I have never taught nor preached those things which have been falsely ascribed to me, and the chief aim of all my preaching, writing, and acts was that I might save men from sin; and to-day I am willing and glad to die for that truth of the gospel which I have taught, written, and preached." Whereupon the executioner set fire to the fagots, and while the flames were rising higher and higher he cried, "O Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon us!" A second time he cried out, "Thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon us!" but when for the third time

he began to say, "Thou who wast born of the Virgin Mary," a gust of wind blew the flames into his face, and while his lips still moved he gave up the ghost.

When the wood was all burnt the body was still seen to be hanging to the stake by means of the chain. The executioners beat the stake and all that remained on it to the ground, piled up more wood upon it, and burnt the remains. The heart having fallen out of the body, they stuck it on a stick and held it in the fire till it was destroyed. Every article of clothing was likewise burnt, in order, as the Elector Palatine said, that the Bohemians might not have anything to keep as relics. Not only this, but the ashes were carefully gathered together with some of the earth where the stake had stood, were loaded on a cart and carried to the neighboring Rhine, where they were cast into the river, in order that not a speck of his dust might remain on earth. But the spot remained holy ground to the Bohemians, who dug up the soil and carried it back to their native land as a precious relic.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WARS OF THE HUSSITES.

We have followed the fortunes of Huss so closely in the preceding pages, that we have left out of sight many important and interesting events that were closely connected with him and his teachings. His power did not cease with his life. As we have already shown that in order to estimate him aright it was necessary to give a general view of reformatory ideas throughout the Middle Ages, so for the same reason we can not close this brief account of his life with the description of his death. With him it was especially true that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. During all the terrible events that occurred in Bohemia for a quarter of a century after his death, the spirit of Huss was the leading influence, and like the spirit of Julius Cæsar in Shakespeare's play, lent unity to the whole movement of the Bohemian Reformation.

Before discussing the Hussite wars, however, a word or two must be devoted to the fate of Huss's friend and fellow reformer, Jerome of Prague. We have seen how he came to Constance, how he hastily departed, was captured and brought

back a prisoner. Already before Huss's condemnation Jerome had undergone an examination before the Council, where amid cries of "To the stake with him!" he defended his opinions with eloquence and force. That night Peter of Mladenowic knocked at the window of his prison, and cried out: "Be steadfast, and fear not to die for the truth, concerning which you said such noble things when you were free." To which Jerome answered: "In truth, brother, I do not fear death, and as we once have said many things concerning the truth, we shall now see how it works in practice."

Alas for poor human nature! Jerome's glory was not destined to shine with the pure, unsullied luster of that of Huss. Worn out by sickness, his spirit broken by long confinement in chains, intimidated by threats, in his third hearing before the Council, September 11, 1415, he was forced to recant, signing a document in which he submitted to the will of the Council, and approved the condemnation of Wyclif and Huss. But during the long months of prison life that followed a change came over him, his courage reasserted itself, a feeling of bitter remorse took possession of him, and when on May 30, 1416, he was brought again before the Council he gave a marvelous exhibition of lofty courage and extraordinary eloquence and power.

A striking witness to the power of speech is that scene where, surrounded by hostile men, con-

fronted by all the power, dignity, and learning of Christendom, Jerome made a public withdrawal of his former recantation. So nobly did he speak that, says Poggio Bracciolini, "Everybody was touched to the quick and wished he might escape." He declared that he had done nothing in his whole life that he ever repented of so bitterly as he did his recantation; that he revoked it from his very soul; that he had lied like a miscreant in making that recantation; and that John Huss was a holy man. And when he was threatened with punishment if he did not repent, he is said to have made this prophetical answer: "You have resolved to condemn me maliciously and unjustly, without having convicted me of any crime, but after my death I will leave a sting in your conscience and a worm that shall never die. I make my appeal from hence to the sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence you shall appear to answer me a hundred years hence."

After this there was nothing more for the Council to do than to proceed to sentence him to the same death that Huss had suffered. The story of his martyrdom is even more inspiring than that of his master, Huss. He seemed anxious to make amends for his former weakness by maintaining now a brave and unruffled demeanor. When they gave him a paper mitre with the devils painted upon it, similar to that given to Huss, Jerome cast his hat among the priests that surrounded him, and

put the mitre on his head with his own hands, saying he was glad to wear it for the sake of Him who was crowned with thorns. And as he was led by the soldiers through the streets to the place of execution he sung the Apostle's Creed and the hymns of the Church in a loud voice and with a cheerful countenance. When he came to the place where Huss had been executed, he knelt down before the stake and with a low voice made a long prayer, and while he was being stripped and bound to the stake, and the wood was piled up about him, he raised his voice and sang the hymn,

> "Salve festa dies toto venerabilis ævo
> Qua Deus infernum vicit et astra tenens."

And then, after having repeated the Creed, he addressed the multitude, and said: "Dear friends, know that even as I have now sung, so do I believe, and not otherwise." When fire was set to the wood he cried out in Latin, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." And when he was almost smothered by the flame he cried out in Bohemian, "O, Lord God Almighty, have mercy on me and pardon my transgressions, for Thou knowest that I have sincerely loved Thy truth;" and with these words he gave up the ghost.

Many writers of the times bear witness to the firmness with which Jerome met his death. Æneas Sylvius, afterward Pope Pius II, says: "Huss was burnt first, and after him Jerome of Prague. They

suffered death with very great constancy, and went to the fire as cheerfully as if it had been to a feast, without making any complaint. We do not find that any of the philosophers ever suffered death with so much constancy." In a letter written to Lionardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini speaks of Jerome's eloquence and constancy: "I confess that I have never heard any person, in the defense of a criminal cause, who came nearer to that eloquence of the ancients which we admire every day, and when the executioners came from behind to light the fire he cried out: 'Come forward and set fire to it before my face. For had I been afraid, I should not have come hither when I might so easily have avoided it.' Thus died a man whose merit can not be sufficiently admired. I was a witness of his end, and have considered all the acts. Whether he was guilty of insincerity or obstinacy, I know not; but never was there a death more philosophical."

With the execution of Jerome we must leave the city of Constance and turn our eyes to Bohemia, where even after the death of Huss his influence remained all powerful. During his absence in Constance one question had grown up that was destined to play a very important rôle in the whole movement of Hussitism. In early times it had been customary to present both the wafer and the cup to the laity during the celebration of the Eucharist. This custom, however, had grad-

ually been given up in most countries entirely, and in Bohemia to some extent. In the latter country, however, a bitter strife arose over this question, which was led by a certain Jacob of Mies, called on account of his small stature Jacobel. Through his influence the custom of giving the cup or chalice spread throughout nearly all Bohemia, in spite of the fact that the Council of Constance solemnly condemned his doctrine. It was undoubtedly an additional cause for hatred toward Huss that the leaders of this movement for the Eucharist in two kinds were among his followers. He himself, although he had nothing to do in starting the movement, had written a letter from his prison endorsing of the doctrine of Jacobel.

The attitude of the Council on this question was in itself enough to cause a wide rift between the Bohemians and the Church. Yet this was nothing to the feeling stirred up by the treatment of Huss and Jerome in Constance, a feeling which rose to a veritable fury when both men were slain. Nor did the Council or the king seem to be fully aware of the seriousness of the situation. At the news of Huss's death the nobles had met in Bethlehem Chapel, had decreed honors of martyrdom to Huss, and sent a letter of protest to the Council, signed by sixty of the most distinguished men of the land.

The spirit of indignation shown in this protest gives us a clear idea of the state of mind which

pervaded all Bohemia, and explains the long and wonderfully successful contests which the followers of Huss maintained against the Roman Church and its defender, Emperor Sigismund. "As by the laws of God and nature, every one should do to others as he would that they should do to him, and as we ought not to do that to others which we would not that they should do to us; after reflection upon that divine maxim of love to our neighbor, we have thought fit to write these letters to you touching the Reverend Master John Huss, regular Bachelor of Divinity and Preacher of the Gospel. Meantime we know not from what motive you first condemned him in the Council of Constance, and then put him to a cruel and ignominious death as an obstinate heretic, without his having made any confession, or being convicted of any error or heresy, upon the false and sinister accusations of his capital enemies, and the enemies of our kingdom, and of the Marquisate of Moravia, and by the instigation and importunity of certain traitors, to the eternal scandal of our most Christian Kingdom of Bohemia and to us all. We protest, therefore, with the heart as well as the lips, that Master John Huss was a man very honest, just, and catholic; that for many years he conversed among us with godliness void of offense. That during all that time he explained to us and our subjects the Gospel and the books of the Old and New Testaments, according to the exposition

of the holy doctors approved by the Church; and that he has left writings behind him, wherein he constantly abhors all error and all heresy, as he taught us to detest them, exhorting us at the same time, without ceasing, to peace and charity, and persuading us to it by both his discourses and example. So that we can not find after all the inquiry we have made, that the said Master John Huss ever taught or preached any error or heresy whatsoever, or that he offended any of us or our subjects in word or deed. On the contrary, he has lived with piety and good conduct, exhorting all mankind to the observation of the gospel and of the maxims of the holy fathers for the edification of Holy Mother Church and of our neighbors.

"You are not content with disgracing us and our kingdom of Bohemia by these undertakings, but you have unmercifully imprisoned, and perhaps already put to death, Master Jerome of Prague, who certainly was a torrent of eloquence. Besides this, we have heard to our very great sorrow that certain slanderers, hateful to God and men, treacherous enemies to the kingdom of Bohemia, have wickedly and falsely reported to you and your Council that in the said kingdom several errors were propagated which had infected us and many others of the faithful.

"We make known to you, Fathers, by these presents and also to all Christian people, with a

firm confidence in Jesus Christ, attended with a pure and sincere conscience and an orthodox faith, that whosoever of any rank, pre-eminence, dignity, degree or religion whatsoever he be, has said and affirmed, or doth say and affirm, that errors and heresies are propagated in the kingdom of Bohemia, has told a capital lie, as a villain and traitor, the only dangerous heretic and a child of the devil, who is a liar and a murderer. And notwithstanding all that has passed we are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defense of the law of Jesus Christ and of His faithful preachers, who declare it with zeal, humility, and constancy, without being shocked by all human constitutions that shall oppose this resolution." To this letter the Council replied February 23, 1416, summoning the signers to Constance—a citation, however, which they did not obey.

Thus finally the gauge of war was cast. On the one side stood the Roman Church with its powerful hierarchy, supported by the Emperor Sigismund; on the other stood practically the whole Bohemian nation, for by this time not only the upper classes, but even the peasants, had become followers of the martyred Huss. If they had only agreed among themselves, they might have finally succeeded in forming a national Church, or even have anticipated by a hundred years the great Reformation. But alas! difference of opinion on matters of belief, as well as of politics, almost

from the beginning separated them into several distinct groups. Before we can understand the trend matters took in Bohemia for the next quarter of a century, it is necessary for us to get some idea of these different groups and of the men who led them.

Of the loyal Catholics it is not to our purpose here to speak. They formed in the beginning a very small minority, and constantly kept plotting against the Hussites, and especially did all they could to sow discord among them. The followers of Huss may be divided into two great divisions, the Calixtines (sometimes called Utraquists), and the Taborites. The former was the conservative party, whose chief tenet was the use of the cup (calix, whence their party name) by the laity. There were various shades, among them some approaching very nearly to the Catholics, and others on the other hand not easy to distinguish from the Taborites. Both they and the latter, however, remained faithful to the end to the famous articles which was for them the irreducible minimum in all negotiations with the Emperor Sigismund and others for all the years to come. These Four Articles are as follows: 1. The demand that the Eucharist be administered in two kinds. 2. That the free preaching of the gospel be allowed. 3. That the punishment of public sins be without privilege of the clergy; and 4. That the temporal property of priests and religious institutions be administered by the civil authorities.

The party of the Calixtines was composed of the leading men of Bohemia, and was largely recruited from the upper classes. The vast majority of the people, however, belonged to the radical party, or Taborites, as they were called, from the newly organized city of Tabor, which was built by them, and which remained the center of their religious and political life during all the years in which they still existed as an organized body.

We must by no means, however, think of the Taborites as a compact and harmonious party. In it were gathered together all those who, starting out from Huss's doctrines, carried them to radical extremes along lines both social and political. What happens in all times of great revolutions among the people happened now. All the strange, mystic, extravagant, and superstitious doctrines that had flourished among the Cathari and Waldensians, and that were to flourish later in the sects that swarmed through all Europe during the Reformation, a brood whose descendants exist in many places even to-day, then showed themselves among the Taborites.

Among them we may mention briefly the Picards, the Nicolaites, and the Millennarians, those who believed that the end of the world was at hand, that the old dreams of Joachim da Fiori were about to come true, that a new era of peace and holiness was to appear on the earth, when there should be no more sin or selfishness, when

all men should be free and equal, all distinctions between nobles and peasants be wiped out, property abolished, labor unnecessary, hunger and poverty unknown, and when all men having become holy there should no longer be any need for the Bible or churches or creeds. Those who believed in the speedy end of the world sold their property to prepare for the coming of the Lord; strange individuals rose here and there proclaiming themselves to be Moses or Christ. Many, the so-called Adamites, went so far as to preach the doctrine of all things in common, even to families and wives. Against these half-insane enthusiasts, however, Ziska arose, with the unrelenting cruelty he used towards his enemies, and soon practically all were destroyed in battle or by execution.

The real party of the Taborites, however, was composed of men more reasonable. While despising the radical extremes of the Adamites and Picards, they likewise despised the lukewarmness of the Calixtines, who at all times showed a willingness to make peace with the emperor and the Church on the basis alone of the Four Articles. The Taborites themselves were uncompromising, and prepared themselves for the inevitable struggle which they foresaw was soon to come. They accepted the Four Articles as the Calixtines did, but in addition to that they discarded most of the ritual and the ancient customs of the Church. They declared that Christ was the only lawgiver, and

that His word is sufficient to teach us what that law is. They swept ruthlessly away all the accumulated débris of the ages, and on the ruins of the papal and ecclesiastical power they raised a new Church, based on the authority alone of two things, the Bible and the human conscience. Thus we see that while on the one hand the Calixtines were but little different from the orthodox Catholics, retaining all their dogmas, the seven sacraments, invocation of the saints, worship of the Virgin Mary, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, the Taborites were almost Protestants, keeping only two sacraments, that of baptism and the Lord's Supper, denying the Real Presence, and condemning the worship of relics and the invocation of the saints.

The two parties naturally differed in the outer forms, the Calixtines keeping all Catholic services and observances, the Taborites abolishing feasts and fasts, dissolving monasteries and convents, repudiating sumptuous vestments and all the pomp and ceremony of the mass. While they did not definitely declare that every layman was a priest, they did show themselves utterly indifferent to all external signs, tonsure, costume, etc., which marked the priest out from other men. Every man who followed Christ could teach and preach, even without the permission of the bishop.

The customs and manners of the Taborites was very much like that of the Puritans in the days of

Cromwell. Indeed there is a striking resemblance between these two peoples, rising in the name of religion and waging war under the standard of the Prince of Peace. The manner of life of the army of the Taborites was ascetic to a degree; the discipline was entirely based on religion. All trivial amusements were forbidden, no cards or dice, no dancing or even music were allowed. The children were early taught to read, and the entire people were "Bibelfest." Æneas Sylvius blushed when he saw that while many priests had never read the New Testament, a number even of the Taborite women knew the whole Bible.

It is interesting to read the picture of the life of these people as given by Æneas Sylvius, who was one of several ambassadors sent to treat with them at their headquarters in Tabor. "A most remarkable spectacle was now witnessed, an indiscriminate rabble, mostly composed of peasants. Although a cold rain-storm prevailed at the time, they had no other protection than a mere frock. Some wore robes made of skins; some of their horsemen had no saddles, some had no bridles, and others were without stirrups. One was booted, another not. Having entered the town, we took a view of it, and if I were not to call it a town or asylum for heretics, I should be at a loss for a name to give it. On the outer gate of the city there are two shields hung suspended. On one of these is a picture of an angel holding a cup, which

he is represented as extending to the people as if to invite them to share in the communion. On the other there is a portrait of Ziska, who is represented as an old man and entirely blind. These people have no greater anxiety for anything than to hear a sermon. Their place of worship is built of wood, and is much like a barn; this they call their temple."

One of the most curious things in all this strange, eventful history is the character of the leaders of the Hussites, especially the Taborites. Huss himself was a man of gentle, conciliating disposition, was by no means endowed with great executive ability, and felt a spirit of love and kindliness towards even his bitterest enemies. The leader of the forces of the Bohemians, when the inevitable struggle finally broke forth, was in many respects more like Attila, the scourge of God, than like the man whose doctrines he maintained against mighty armies, by means of fire and sword. Legend has told over and over again of his cruelty, his thirst for vengeance, his untiring sternness toward his enemies.

John of Trocznow, surnamed Ziska, by which name he is alone known in history, belonged himself to the people, and it was this fact undoubtedly that helped to give him his extraordinary popularity. He was a man of middle height, with broad shoulders, thick lips, and closely cropped hair, with a long black mustache, after the Polish fashion.

His strange appearance was heightened by the fact that he only had one eye; and this, too, he lost later, so that his last campaigns were carried on while he was totally blind. Two sentiments filled him with inflexible passion—patriotism and faith in Hussitism. As Palacky says, "He was a fanatic and had the unshakable conviction of fanaticism, its intolerance and its unpitying and inflexible logic."

Ziska was a military genius of the highest order, and it was undoubtedly due almost entirely to him that the Bohemians, during all those long years of contest with nearly all Christendom, never lost a battle. Having no horses, he was unable to fight with the usual means of warfare at that time, and was forced to rely entirely on infantry. This he made so formidable, however, that his army became the object of almost superstitious terror on the part of his enemies. Moved by one common impulse, in perfect discipline and order, wielding long poles, fifteen to eighteen feet in length, armed with iron points (it was only later that he had guns and cannon), they all marched together, men, women, and even children, toward the enemy, whom they invariably put to flight. One invention of Ziska's especially proved successful, the moving ramparts formed of wagons bound together by chains and protected by boards, behind which the shooters were hidden. On the march these wagons proceeded in rows of twos and fours, each one

carrying twenty men. But when the battle was fought they swung around into position and formed a barricade, which all the efforts of the enemy were never able to scale. Such was the perfect instrument of warfare of Ziska, and long after his death it proved its invincibility in the hands of his successors, the Greater and the Less Procopius.

It is not our place here to describe in detail the terrible wars that swept over Bohemia for a quarter of a century after the death of Huss. And yet we must cast at least a fleeting glance at the main currents of these movements, oftentimes of true epic grandeur. We have seen how wide the cleft had grown between the Roman Church and Bohemia after the events at Constance, culminating as they did in the death of John Huss and Jerome. For some time, however, events stood still, although low mutterings continued to be heard along the horizon from time to time.

The first impulse to open hostilities occurred only when Pope Martin sent a legate to execute the decree of the Council and his own Bull. The legate was driven out of the country by the enraged people, who now flocked from all sides to the standard raised by Ziska. At this crucial moment occurred the death of King Wenzel, and another question, that of the disposition of the crown, came to complicate matters. There was still a large number of conservatives, who hoped that by electing Sigismund to the throne they might

make favorable conditions for their own faith. If Sigismund had been a wise man, he would have seen how matters lay. But strong in his own self-confidence, he treated with contempt all negotiations on the basis of the Four Articles, declaring he would govern Bohemia as his father had done; that is, he would make no compromise with heresy.

After this uncompromising attitude on the part of Sigismund, nothing stood in the way of a bitter civil war. In answer to the desire of the emperor, Pope Martin issued a Bull, March 1, 1420, in which he invited all Christendom to seize arms, march toward Bohemia, and help to destroy the Wyclifites, Hussites, and all other heretics, promising full indulgences to all those who either would take part themselves or would pay for a substitute. The effect of the Bull throughout all Europe was extraordinary; volunteers flowed in from all lands, Poland, Germany, France, England, and even Spain. The army finally under the orders of Sigismund is said to have amounted to one hundred and forty thousand or one hundred and fifty thousand men.

In the meantime the approaching danger united all parties of the Hussites in defense of their faith. Although a number of cities fell into the hands of the king, the followers of Huss made their way to Prague, where the final and decisive combat was to take place. The city was surrounded and besieged, but owing to the generalship of Ziska and the heroic conduct of the Hussites, especially the Taborites,

all efforts to take the city were in vain. After many defeats and disasters, the imperial army was forced to abandon the siege and retreat. Thus ended what is known as the First Crusade of the Bohemian wars.

Bohemia now became the most prominent country in all Christendom. The teachings of Huss spread through all lands, while the socialistic and republican doctrines of the Taborites threatened to undermine the very basis of political authority in Europe. This fact was skillfully taken advantage of by the pope in preaching a new crusade, for he pointed out that not only ecclesiastical but monarchical institutions were at stake.

A second invasion was organized. Two hundred thousand men marched toward Bohemia, and laid siege to Zatec, one of the holy cities of the Taborites. Although this city had only five thousand or six thousand garrison, it repulsed all assaults, and waited in confidence for the arrival of re-enforcements. The besieging army in the meantime lost all discipline, spent their time in foraging the country, burning villages, slaying every man, woman, or child that spoke Bohemian, irrespective of their religious beliefs. The Hussites set out from Prague to assist their compatriots who were shut up in Zatec. Before they could reach the city, however, the undisciplined mob of mercenaries, which formed the imperial army, took fright at the approach of the dreaded hordes and fled. They were

pursued by the garrison of Zatec, who slew thousands in their flight. This was in October, 1421.

But while this army fled back towards Germany, the emperor himself with eighty thousand men invaded Moravia. Here Ziska's genius manifested itself in its full power. By rapidity of movement, by skillful choice of field of battle, by ingenious strategy, by untiring diligence, he won a complete victory over his imperial adversary. On December 21, 1421, he was attacked in an open plain, but making a rampart of carts, he repulsed all assaults. He himself left to seek re-enforcements, and on his return, January 6, 1422, he attacked the enemy, cut their army in two, and so confused the emperor that the latter lost his head and turned to flight, followed hotly by the Taborites. Many thousands were slain or perished by cold and hunger. In four days of combat Ziska won three battles, took two fortified cities, slew twelve thousand men, and made many thousands prisoners. Thus the Second Crusade ended as the first, in complete disaster to the Catholic arms.

In July, 1422, another Crusade was ordered by the Diet of Nuremberg, under the command of Frederick of Brandenburg; but being deserted by the emperor he accomplished but little.

An event now occurred which meant more to the Hussites than the loss of many battles, the death of Ziska. As soon as the foreign enemies had left Bohemia in peace for a short period of

time, discord and bitter animosity filled the ranks of the Hussites. The differences in religious, social, and political views between the Calixtines and the Taborites were too deep to be easily reconciled. While they all agreed on the Four Articles, they differed fundamentally on nearly every other point. With the retreat of the Germans anarchy broke forth in Bohemia, and so bitter became the quarrels between the hostile parties that it seemed as if war alone could settle their difference.

At the head of the Calixtines was Corybut, at the head of the Taborites was Ziska. The Calixtines made preparation to defend Prague against the Taborites; but when Ziska with his terrible army approached, the citizens of Prague, full of terror, sent an embassy headed by John of Rockyzane, who for many years remained the head of the Calixtines, to beg Ziska to save the city. Forced by the Taborites, to whom Prague was a holy city, Ziska made a treaty of peace. He did this unwillingly and with a saddened heart, for he knew it was only putting off the inevitable conflict. Soon after he was stricken with the plague, and died October 11, 1424.

His death filled the whole army with profound sorrow and desolation. He was buried at Caslav, and near his tomb was made this inscription: "O Huss! here lies John Ziska, your avenger, and the emperor himself has bent before him." It is said that more than a century afterwards the Em-

peror Ferdinand was passing through the country, and saw a mass of iron hanging near a tomb. He asked his courtiers to read the inscription, but they dared not repeat it to him; whereupon he approached and read himself the name of Ziska. "Fie, Fie!" said he; "this ugly beast, dead a hundred years, still frightens the living." Yet, although he had intended to pass the night in the city, he changed his mind and proceeded on his way.

In the death of Ziska the Taborites had lost the one man who had held together the various elements of which they were composed. They now fell asunder, and in addition to the regular Taborites formed a new party, called the Orphans (alluding to the death of Ziska), which approached the Calixtines by their religious beliefs, and the Taborites by their social ideas. They had their separate chiefs and separate capital; in general, however, they sided with the Taborites.

With the death of Ziska the first period of the Hussite wars ended. The Bohemians had become a powerful nation, had held in check the efforts of all Christendom marshaled against them; they had shown the world that they were a power not to be despised. It is not necessary here to give in detail all the events that followed, the skirmishes and battles at home and abroad, the constant quarrels and discord that rent the body of Hussites, and slowly prepared the dissolution that was to come.

In the first few years, however, after Ziska's death it seemed as if the nation was as strong as ever. It is true that the new Commander-in-chief, Procopius, was not so great an organizer as Ziska, but he had a great many of the latter's extraordinary qualities as a general and strategist. He found a veteran army made ready to his hand, hardened and trained by many years of warfare and discipline, rendered confident in its invincibility by a series of victories not broken by a single defeat. This army was used by Procopius with distinguished ability; he had the same rapidity of movement, surety of glance, and boldness of attack that had been so characteristic of Ziska.

Yet the whole aim of Procopius was to bring peace and tranquillity once more to his native land. He soon foresaw, however, that the best way to accomplish this aim was not to wait patiently within the frontiers of Bohemia until the enemy could raise an army and attack him, but rather to inspire fear and respect in the hearts of those countries in which the various Crusades had been recruited. He hoped by ravaging these countries to direct their attention from Bohemia to their own territories, and thus possibly he might be able to make a lasting treaty of peace.

After having defeated a large army of the allies near the city of Usti on the Elbe, and after having restored a momentary peace among the discordant elements of the Hussites, Procopius un-

dertook to carry out his plan of foreign invasion in 1427. Since the disgraceful failure of the third Crusade in 1422, Germany had nearly forgotten her humiliation, but she was suddenly brought to a realizing sense of the dangerous condition of the neighboring country of Bohemia, by the news of a large army of Hussites who, having crossed the frontiers of their native land, were ravaging Austria, Moravia, and Silesia. A Diet was hastily summoned, April, 1427, and it was resolved to attack Bohemia in four armies at four different points. The commander-in-chief of the combined forces was the Cardinal Legate Henry of Winchester, brother of Henry IV of England, and uncle of the Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester. The army in all was not far from two hundred thousand men, about equally divided between infantry and cavalry. They started out, full of hope and confidence, they captured cities, laid waste the country, and everywhere acted with their customary license and lack of discipline. Against this huge army of mercenaries, the Calixtines, Taborites, and Orphans —once more united, as they always had been when foreign enemies came to threaten their native land—opposed a solid front of well trained, well disciplined, and well seasoned veterans.

They marched toward Stribro, where the enemy was encamped; but scarcely had the Germans heard the noise of the approaching Hussites, than the old panic seized them once more, and they fled

before even the enemy had come within sight. They were met by Cardinal Winchester, who, arriving with re-enforcements, succeeded in checking their flight and inducing them to turn back and meet the Bohemians, who were far inferior in numbers. But as soon as they saw the ranks of the Taborites they were again seized with panic, and fled in an irresistible wave of retreat, which swept everything along with it.

Rendered still more confident by this victory, Procopius in the following year carried on that extraordinary campaign throughout the various lands of Germany that filled the hearts of all men with terror and dismay. All branches of Hussites supported him, and took part in these expeditions, Calixtines as well as Orphans and Taborites. Bands of soldiers were sent to Silesia, Saxony, Bavaria, and even France. They captured great cities, burned villages, and everywhere left behind them death and desolation.

All Germany was aroused to desperate efforts to meet this danger; the German princes gathered an army of one hundred thousand men, nearly four times the size of the Bohemian forces, which never amounted to more than thirty thousand. Sigismund, who had been busy with the Turks in Eastern Europe, now came back after many years of absence from Germany. The Diet of Nuremberg, held in February, 1431, ordered a new Crusade, which was preached by Pope Eugene IV, the suc-

cessor of Martin V. A vast number of men advanced towards the frontiers of Bohemia. The general command was in the hands of the Elector Frederick of Brandenburg. Yet they had no general plan of action; they entered Bohemia, devastated the fields, massacred the peasants. No one was spared, not even the Catholics. They stopped, however, at the news of the approach of the Hussites. On August 14, 1431, toward three o'clock in the afternoon, they heard the noise of the chariots of war, and the hymns sung by the Taborites. The old scenes repeated themselves; a wild terror seized the whole army; flinging away their arms and all other impediments they turned to a mad flight, leaving behind them thousands of slain, and an immense quantity of booty.

And now all parties began to see the uselessness of these bloody contests, which led to no decisive results. It was no longer a question of Bohemia alone. All Europe was involved in the mighty upheaval. The ideas of the Hussites were scattered far and wide; one of their manifestoes was even found nailed to the door of the Church of Bâle, where the Council was in session. This had been written by Procopius, and produced an immense impression. Everywhere in Germany revolts among the peasantry occurred, and leagues were organized. A cry for peace arose throughout all Europe, and the pope was implored to make all concessions not inconsistent with the very existence of the Church.

On the other hand, Bohemia was utterly exhausted; the land was a desert, countless villages were depopulated. Although the Bohemians had invariably been victorious, multitudes had been slain. Hence when the Council of Bâle invited the Hussites to send delegates with a view to coming to some agreement on the subjects under dispute, after some hesitation all parties finally agreed to send an embassy, among them being Procopius the Great, leader of the Taborites, and Rockyzane, head of the Calixtine party. It was with strange feelings that the inhabitants of Bâle, as well as those who had come to attend the Council, awaited the entry of these men, whose names had become legendary throughout Europe. In the words of Æneas Sylvius (quoted by Palacky), "They streamed into the streets; women and children looked out of the windows and pointed out with their fingers the different members of the party, gazing with wonder at their strange costume, stern faces, and wild eyes. The eyes of most, however, were fastened on Procopius; he was the one who so often had destroyed the vast armies of the faithful and slain so many thousands, feared by friends as well as enemies, as an unconquered, bold, restless general, undismayed in the face of any danger."

It is not the place here to discuss the complicated negotiations that followed; the hopes and fears, the doubts and disgust of the Hussites, as soon as it became manifest that a satisfactory solu-

tion was not yet to be. They left Bâle on April 14, 1433. The Council sent a commission to Prague, which did little more, however, than secretly to sow the seeds of discord among the various parties of the Hussites. These discords, which had existed from the very beginning, now began to assume proportions so great that the only issue was war between them. On the one hand the Calixtines, supported by the nobles, were finally agreed to accept the compromise proposed by the Council of Bâle, and which, while pretending to yield to the demands of the Hussites, that the Four Articles be respected, really left a loophole of escape on the part of the Catholic Church as soon as its strength and the weakness of the Hussites would permit. The Taborites and Orphans, led by Procopius, opposed uncompromisingly the acceptance of the Compactata, as the above compromise was called. New Prague was in the hands of the reactionary nobles. Procopius set out with his army to lay siege to them. The nobles with twenty-five thousand men met him near the city of Lipau, where the final battle of the great Hussite wars was fought out to the bitter end—not this time a battle between the united party of Bohemians and a foreign enemy, but between different members of that party itself. For the first time the Taborites were defeated; sixteen thousand dead were left on the field of battle, among them being the great Procopius himself:

"Suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

With the battle of Lipau and the death of Procopius, the Hussite movement for all practical purposes came to an end. What all the power of the papacy and the empire had not been able to do,—that is, to destroy the teachings of Huss throughout Bohemia,—now was accomplished by internal discord. Although Hussitism was not immediately crushed out, as the Albigensians had been, for instance, yet from this time on for two hundred years we mark an ever increasing diminution in its influence in Bohemia itself, until in the early eighteenth century the last vestiges disappeared forever from its native soil.

For a long time the Hussites still remained strong enough to make a compromise, and Sigismund himself accepted as the basis of the compromise the concordat between the Council of Bâle and the States of Bohemia, the Compactata as it was called, which safeguarded in a certain sense the Four Articles, which as we have seen had from first to last formed the irreducible minimum in all negotiations on the part of the Hussites. As we

may naturally suppose, Emperor Sigismund paid no attention to the Compactata, which were formally abolished by Pope Pius II (Æneas Sylvius) in 1462.

After the death of Sigismund (1437), we have a succession of kings of Bohemia most of whom we may pass over, merely mentioning George Podiebrad (who died 1471) and Wladislaus of Poland, whose reign and that of his son Louis mark the end of the political and religious independence of Bohemia. Anne, sister of Louis, who became heir to the crown of Bohemia and Moravia by marrying Ferdinand of Austria, grandson of Emperor Maximilian, brought these countries over to the house of Hapsburg. Since then Bohemia has formed an integral part of the Austrian Empire.

Such in brief outline is the political history of Bohemia in the years immediately following the great events we have been considering. Its religious history is marked by melancholy interest. The old bond of union between Calixtines and Taborites—patriotism—was broken when Bohemia lost its freedom. Both parties now took on a different development.

After many vicissitudes the Calixtines were either destroyed by persecution, united with the Catholics, or later merged with the Lutherans. After the sixteenth century all traces of them disappeared forever.

Not so the Taborites, however. Under another name and under changed beliefs they still exist, scattered far and wide over the world. Even in the midst of savage warfare many had fought only under necessity, and had longed for a quiet and peaceful existence, devoted to the worship of God and the service of suffering humanity. Now, when all their victories and all the terrible loss of life had apparently been in vain, the more gentle and spiritual among them turned from earthly to heavenly things. Some of the doctrines of the Waldensians were adopted by them, and soon a large sect, called the Brethren, and later the United Brethren (Unitas Fratrum), arose, the latest development of which is the Moravian Church of to-day.

Henceforth the attention of the student of Huss's influence must be directed chiefly to them. Their history affords a monotonous repetition of all persecuted sects; the same tale of slaughter and exile, brightened by the same examples of heroism and martyrdom, cheerfully accepted for the glory of God. They were persecuted in 1458, when Podiebrad became king; again in 1468, at the instigation of Rockyzane. In 1523 they sent a commission to Luther to give an account of their doctrines and constitution, at which he was well pleased. In 1535 Luther and Melanchthon wrote to them among other things as follows: "Since we are agreed in the principal articles of the Christian doctrine, let us receive one another in love;

nor shall any difference of usages and ceremonies disunite our hearts."

In 1546, after Luther's death, they refused to support Emperor Charles V and their own King Ferdinand against the Protestants, and were accused of plotting to bring about the election of the Elector of Saxony to the Bohemian throne, whence a new outburst of persecution, during which their churches were closed and many were imprisoned or banished.

With the opening of the seventeenth century their prospects seemed to brighten. In 1609 Rudolph II ratified the free exercise of religion they had received under Maximilian, and gave them the privilege of erecting churches and choosing nobles to protect their rights. The famous Bethlehem Chapel at Prague, in which Huss had preached, was handed over to them.

All this, however, was only a deceitful calm before the last dreadful tempest, which was soon to swoop down upon them with destructive fury. Rudolph died in 1612, and the universal plan of persecution of the Protestants adopted by the Council of Trent was begun in Bohemia. The mass of the people were filled with rage; renounced their allegiance to the new king, Ferdinand II, flung the imperial councilors out of the window, and elected the Elector Palatine, son-in-law of James I of England, as their king, and thus precipitated the world-historic contest, known as the Thirty

Years' War. The tide of warfare, however, soon rolled its waves far from them, leaving the last followers of Huss in Bohemia a prey to the terrible persecutions that followed the disastrous defeat of Weissenberg, near Prague, in 1620.

They were flung into prison, put to death, or banished. Their ministers hid themselves in forests, lived on the mountains and in caves, whence stealthily stealing forth from time to time they visited their suffering flock. Hundreds of the noble and wealthy families fled to Prussia, Poland, Silesia, and even as far as the Netherlands. Among the most illustrious of these exiles was John Amos Comenius, the far-famed scholar and writer, whose reputation went so far as to bring him an invitation to become president of Harvard University, then but recently founded.

Of those who remained in Bohemia, mostly the common people, we know but little during the succeeding years. They were forced to conform to the Catholic Church, and doubtless many remained therein, but in the case of many this conformity was but external. After the end of the Thirty Years' War they must have lost all hope, for they alone of all the Protestant bodies were not included in the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

After a long period of utter silence we see once more, and for the last time, in the early part of the eighteenth century an active movement among the Brethren, or Moravians, as they are

better known to us now. In 1717 a large number left Bohemia and went to Upper Lusatia, where they joined their compatriots who already had settled there. Later Christian David, tutor to the Baron de Schweinitz, had a meeting with Count Zinzendorf, who was anxious for the salvation of the children of his subjects. The outcome of this and other conferences was the establishment of the village of Herrnhut, on the estate of Zinzendorf, which from that time on became the center of the Moravian Church throughout the world. From the very first, missions became an absorbing part of their work, and from their desire to save the Indians arose their settlements in Georgia, but especially in Pennsylvania. To-day the town of Bethlehem in that State is the largest Moravian community in the world, and for nearly two hundred years has exerted a strong influence on the educational and religious life of the United States.

We have thus traced the life of John Huss in brief; have tried to show his position as summing up certain evangelical doctrines that had been sporadically in the minds of men for centuries, and we have tried to show the vicissitudes of his followers down to the present. Yet the influence of Huss was not only exerted upon his immediate followers; Martin Luther himself tells how great that influence had been on the Reformation which he himself had set in motion. "Existimo Johannem

Huss suo sanguine peperisse Evangelium quod nunc habemus."* His place in this world-shaking movement is well represented in a miniature picture in an old Moravian hymn-book preserved in the University Library at Prague, which represents Wyclif seizing a torch, Huss lighting it, and Luther holding it on high.

Later his followers, scattered all over Christendom, had no small influence on the various forms of Protestantism. It was they who gave a distinctly Pietistic turn to religion in the eighteenth century. Zinzendorf, who was a Lutheran, soon became the leader of the Moravians, holding some such relation to them and the Lutheran Church as Wesley did to the Methodists and the Church of England. Nay, it is not too much to say that Methodism is largely the outcome of Moravianism. We never can know what might have happened if John Wesley had not met Spangenberg in Georgia, and especially Peter Böhler in London. But we do know that it was through them, especially the latter, that he received the blessing of a heart religion. When he went to Herrnhut, where he spent two weeks with Zinzendorf, he was filled with devout enthusiasm. "O," cried he, "that this religion might cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea!"

But the glory of John Huss is not confined to

* In my opinion John Huss bought with his own blood the gospel which we now possess.

his influence on this or that religious denomination. His heroic death is the heritage of all mankind, because he was a witness of the truth as he conceived it, and because, fortified by the breast-plate of a clear conscience, not all the combined efforts of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire could make him falter for a single moment. At the time it seemed an unequal contest between this lonely man and the mighty concourse of his adversaries; at the time it seemed as if he had ignominiously failed. But we know better now. The proud and contemptuous hierarchy of Rome, shorn of her strength, sits a voluntary prisoner within the walls of the Vatican. But the right of every man to believe according to his conscience has spread from land to land, until to-day Christian missionaries may penetrate unharmed even into the Forbidden Kingdom or the impenetrable recesses of Darkest Africa. And no man has done more to prepare the final triumph of the glorious liberty of the Gospel of Christ than John Huss.

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